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SIXTY YEARS IN THE WILDERNESS.

SOME PASSAGES BY THE WAY.

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XVIII.

EPISODES.

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AMONG miscellaneous episodes in my journey through the Wilderness I have, as related in connection with Fred Burnaby, been up in a balloon. I have been down a coal mine in South Wales, and a silver mine at Leadville, U.S.A., this last a rare privilege in a jealously guarded place where, as an ordinarily inflexible rule, 'no one is admitted except on business.' I have voyaged in a submarine boat, and I have seen two men hanged.

One experience foregone sorely against my will, was descent in a diving-bell. When, in January 1873, the emigrant ship 'Northfleet' sank off Dungeness, drowning 300 people, I described for the 'Daily News' incidents consequent on the tragedy. A peculiarity of the shipwreck was the non-appearance on the surface of the waters of the bodies of the drowned. Usually, after a certain number of days, the sea gives up its dead. In the case of the 'Northfleet' only a score or so of the drowned floated within a week of the wreck. It was conjectured that the great company were entombed in the hull. It was arranged that a diving-bell should go down to fathom the mystery.

I struck up a close friendship with Captain Oates, the original commander of the 'Northfleet,' whose escape from the fateful ship was singular. He had made all arrangements for sailing

when he was served with a mandate ordering him to attend and give evidence in the Tichborne case, then approaching its climax. He had no option. To his profound regret, and considerable pecuniary loss, he remained ashore whilst the 'Northfleet,' under a new commander, set forth with bellying sails to meet her doom at Dungeness.

I did not go down in the diving-bell, for the simple reason that the diving-bell did not go down. A storm beat up Channel, churning the waters above the submerged wreck in a way that made impossible the operation of the diving-bell. It prevailed for more than a week, when the project was abandoned.

Captain Oates was one of the few men who saw and conversed with the real Roger Tichborne before his disappearance. In the course of a drive from Dover to Dungeness he gave me a vivid account of the incident, which I transcribe from my diary of that date. It throws a flood of light on the memorable story.

'I was at the time,' he said, 'in charge of the "John Bibby," lying at Rio, waiting for a cargo. The "Bella" lay alongside, and, as her owners and mine were connected in business arrangements, Captain Birkett and I were often together, and used to talk our affairs over. One day, when he was ready to sail, he came to me and said, "Oates, there is a young fellow been over to see me about taking a passage in the 'Bella' to New York."

"Well," I said, "you have a berth, and may as well make a dollar or two for the ship."

"'Xactly," said he, "but the fact is the young fellow has got no money; he says he is well connected, has plenty of rich friends in England, and that a letter of credit is waiting for him at New York. But he has run through all his money here, is heavily in debt, and wants to get quietly away."

"Well," I said, "that's another sort of thing, Birkett," I says, "You know well enough what the passage money to be paid at the other end usually comes to. However, bring the young fellow over to breakfast in the morning, and we'll have a look at him."

'So next morning Birkett and the young fellow came over to breakfast with me, and he told his story. It was impossible to be in his company five minutes without knowing that he was of gentleman stock, and after he was gone I said to Birkett, "Let him have the passage. If he pays it will be all right, and if he don't it will be only another plate of sole on the table during the voyage, and the owners need not know anything about it."

'Birkett took my word and let the young fellow come aboard. The authorities at Rio were very strict at the time, and it was

necessary for every one leaving the city to have a passport. Tichborne, owing money all about, could not, of course, get his passport, and we had to smuggle him aboard. He came off in a boat the night before, and when the custom-house officers were within sight next day, for the last look round, we put him down in a hole in the cabin floor, underneath the table. The custom-house officers came aboard, mustered the crew, and found them all right.

"Any one else aboard, Captain Birkett?" says he.

"No," says Birkett; "but come down in the cabin and take a cup of coffee before you go."

The officer came down and sat at the table with his feet on the plank which covered young Tichborne. When he had finished his coffee he and I put off. The "Bella" made sail, and I never saw or heard anything about the ship till a few days later a bit of stern and a portion of the poop floated ashore, and told us she had foundered.

'When this blackguard (the Claimant) was examined in private for the first time, five or six years ago, he knew nothing at all of this. He tried to get out of it by saying he was drunk when he went aboard, and remained in his cabin in a state of delirium tremens up to the time of the wreck, Tichborne being, as I well knew, as sober as I am this minute.'

The trip in the submarine took place in the spring of 1905. We were staying at Admiralty House, Portsmouth, the guests of Admiral and Lady Douglas, he at the time Commander-in-Chief. One day it was proposed that we should inspect a submarine in practice at the mouth of the harbour. Walking through the Dockyard to the Admiral's launch, we passed an interesting spectacle. It was the hull of the submarine 'A 1,' which, twelve months earlier, met with a fate that sent a thrill of horror and sympathy through the country. Practising under water off the 'Nab' lightship in the Channel, she was literally run over by a mammoth ocean steamer homeward-bound. The liner's prow struck her conning-tower, sending her to the bottom of the sea with a crew of nine hands and two officers sealed up in a living tomb. Looking down at the dry dock where the wreck was dealt with we saw the rent in the framework caused by the impact of the great steamer. The Admiral casually mentioned that they were not hurrying forward repairs. There would be no difficulty in obtaining a volunteer crew for the patched up submarine, still retaining a name and identity made memorable by dire disaster. Nevertheless, it was just as well to let the passage of a year or two blunt the sharpness of memory.

Arrived at submarine 'A 2,' waiting the signal for descent into the quiet sea, I asked the Admiral's permission to go down with her. He hesitated for a moment. But what was safe for sailors could not be perilous for a landsman. So he nodded assent, and in a few minutes I was snug on board. We had a pleasant, uneventful voyage. The hold, running the full length and breadth of the little craft, was brilliantly lighted by electricity. As in the case of 'A 1,' there were a crew of nine men and two officers, young lieutenants, in command. During the voyage one stood on the steps of the ladder leading to the conning-tower. The other was in charge below. There was nothing unusual in the atmosphere, fresh air being supplied from chambers storing sufficient for twelve hours. Nor was there anything disturbing in the motion of the boat. As a matter of fact the landsman was not conscious of any movement when the boat sank out of sight of heaven and earth. Nor did he know he was speeding under water, confounding the cod, hampering the haddock and other sprinters of the deep by making the record pace of eight knots. The only feeling approaching uncanniness was born of the silence that prevailed, broken now and then by whispered command from the first lieutenant in the conning tower, repeated by the second lieutenant below, and responded to by hoarse 'Aye, aye' from the bluejacket lying full length on the floor in charge of the particular piece of machinery that had to be adjusted.

The first hanging at which I was present was one of the last under the old barbarous system which brought a mob to the foot of the gallows, clamorous to see a fellow-creature done to death. The convict was a young farm labourer, who, after attending a Sunday afternoon service in the village church, lured into a wood a fellow-worshipper, a little girl eleven or twelve years old, and cruelly murdered her. In those good old times not only were executions public, affording early morning entertainment for Lord Tom Noddy and sightseers of lower degree, but representatives of the Press were admitted to sight of the awful mysteries of preparation for the gallows. Following close on the footsteps of the governor of the prison and the hangman, I was one of a group who stood by the doorway of the pinioning room, and saw the doomed man bound, not to say trussed. Across the waste of forty years I recall the predominant sensation—one of surprise at his stolidity, his uncomplaining acceptance of the operation as if it

were an ordinary part of a morning's toilet. He assisted Calcraft to adjust the belt by removing his handkerchief from the breast pocket of his smock, across which it passed. An ox going to the shambles would have been more resentful.

The gallows were erected outside the county jail, which closely adjoins the railway station. For some hours passengers entering or leaving Shrewsbury by train, looking up at the prison walls, saw a dark object, some five feet ten inches in length, dangling from a rope, 'the blue sky over him like God's great pity.' It was the mark of civilisation cut in the sixth decade of the nineteenth century.

Ten years later Henry Wainwright was hanged at Newgate, the execution being the last scene in what was known as 'the Whitechapel Tragedy.' He killed a girl of whose charms he had grown tired and whose affection for him had become boring. He was caught wheeling the body through the streets of London, with intent to hide it in the cellar of a house he rented near the Elephant and Castle. The proceedings at the foot of the gallows were much more seemly than those attendant on the execution at Shrewsbury. The gruesome ceremony was conducted within the privacy of the prison walls. But there were present in Chapel Yard at least a hundred spectators. About a score were, like myself, members of the Press attendant upon an undesirable duty assigned in the turn of a day's work. The rest were there by favour of the sheriffs, who had delegated to Calcraft the duty, incumbent upon themselves by ancient statute, of personally conducting the hanging.

In one corner of Chapel Yard stood a strongly built wooden shed, newly painted in honour of the day. It was gruesomely like a butcher's shop, windowless, with a skirting in front. An iron beam running its full length about a foot below the roof added to the structural similarity. From the beam hung, not a row of shoulders of mutton or sides of Christmas beef, but a few links of strong chain finished off by a hook. To the chain was knotted a stout hempen cord. It was looped, the noose thrown with a certain ghastly grace over the hook.

This was the sight that met Wainwright's eyes when, a door opening on the courtyard, he walked out into the cool morning air. Bare-headed and pinioned, he bore himself bravely, even with a certain quiet dignity. By his side strode a warder, leading the procession. On his left, slightly to the rear, with an air suggesting the hope that he did not intrude, came a little wizened man. This was Calcraft.

Many years afterwards the hangman called on me—I don't know why or wherefore—and, in my absence from home, left his card. In the circumstances I observed with relief notification that he had 'retired from business.'

XIX.

'IN JOURNEYINGS OFTEN.'

ACCOMPANIED by Mrs. Lucy, an excellent traveller by sea or land, I have journeyed round the world, with shorter excursions to various points of the compass. Ever I was hampered by the exigencies of the Parliamentary session, whose arrangements not only arbitrarily determined the period of setting forth on a journey, but strictly limited the duration of the expedition.

The first time I crossed the Atlantic was in 1878, being commissioned by the 'Daily News' to write a special account of the arrival and reception of the Princess Louise and the Marquis of Lorne, the latter appointed to the Viceroyalty. Here was opportunity of seeing Canada under favourable circumstances. Hardly had the Governor-General and the Princess landed at Halifax, amid the roar of a royal salute and the acclamations of the populace, when I received a telegram from the 'Daily News' manager ordering my instant return. War had broken out in Afghanistan. Parliament was hurriedly summoned in order to pass a vote of credit. If I took the first steamer I would get back in time for the opening day. No steamer was immediately sailing from Halifax. By travelling night and day through the snow-clad plains and forests of Canada we could catch a steamer outward-bound from New York. This we did; but it was not a complete or satisfactory way of seeing Canada.

Five years later we set forth on our journey round the world. Crossing the United States we took ship at San Francisco for Yokohama, coming back through India and the Suez Canal. The Parliamentary recess afforded only five months for this journey, a period one might have profitably spent in Japan or India. But it is wonderful what you can see and learn in five months if you keep eyes and ears open.

In crossing the American Continent we had the great pleasure of the frequent company of Lord and Lady Rosebery. They also were making a tour of the world, going by Australia. We did not voyage in company on the Atlantic, but met frequently

at halting-places on the long railway route, and always dined together. At San Francisco, sleeping at the Palace Hotel, we also enjoyed an earthquake in common. It did not approach in vigour the one which twenty-four years later destroyed the hotel and partly uprooted San Francisco. But, like Mercutio's wound, it served. A large number of the guests fled into the streets. Lady Rosebery spent the night in the corridor, which, compared with her bed or her sitting room, did not seem to afford greatly increased protection. I reflected that, being lodged on one of the topmost stories of the lofty building, it was a far journey to the street. If the earthquake really meant business one would be scarcely safer in the roadway between two rows of houses than on an upper floor. Accordingly I turned over and went to sleep. When I awoke in the morning the guests were ringing for hot water as if nothing had happened since they went to bed.

It was a memorable season for subterranean excitement. Whilst we were on the Pacific, steaming eastward, some island in the Malay Archipelago disappeared in the volcanic eruption. For a period exceeding a month, partly when we were at sea, partly when travelling in jinrickshas through Japan, we nightly had the most glorious sunsets ever seen on sea or land.

At the time of our visit Japan was only beginning to emerge into the full light of Western civilisation. Railways were few, the navy was practically non-existent, the army an undisciplined mob. We chanced to be at Tokio on the Mikado's birthday (November 3, 1883), an event celebrated by a review of the troops in an open space adjoining the Foreign Office. The force consisted of some 8000 men, horse, foot, and artillery. The opening of the day was marked by auguries that did not seem to forecast the military triumphs that astonished the world a quarter of a century later. The Mikado, driving down in his brougham, mounted a safe little bay pony with yellow reins, and, followed by his staff and the military *attachés* of the Foreign Ministers, slowly rode past the ranks standing stiffly at attention. His seat on horseback was peculiar. Holding a yellow rein in either hand, his elbows squared, he sat well forward on the pony's neck after a fashion later made familiar at Epsom by an American jockey.

As soon as the march past commenced one of the Imperial Princes lost the epaulette from his left shoulder, and was nearly thrown from his horse as he frantically clutched at it. Half-way across the review ground the Minister of War's horse bolted,

depositing its rider in the roadway, where he was picked up and carried off to a place of safety. After the review the Mikado withdrew to his tent. Hearing there were present two English visitors, he graciously intimated his desire that they should be presented. At the time his Majesty, who lived to see Japan transformed from a third-rate Power to the position of conqueror of Russia, equal to the mightiest States, was in his thirty-first year. He cultivated to the fullest extent the attribute of impassivity. He had gone out of his way to pay attention to two strangers, but, as through an interpreter he addressed them, his face betrayed about as much expression as is habitual to a brick wall.

I was privileged to see a good deal of the two men who are actually the founders of the modern and marvellous Japanese Empire. Prince Ito, he was plain 'Mr.' in those days, occupied the post of Minister of the Interior. Inouyé was Foreign Minister. In many intimate conversations I had with the latter he told me the history of his life, which reaches beyond the bounds of fancy of the average romancist. He and Ito belonged to the Samurai class, the nobles of old Japan, privileged to carry and use the two-handled sword. Fifty years ago the youths, just past their twentieth year, were in the retinue and confidence of the Prince of Choisiu. He was the last leader of the lost cause of old Japan. His name lives in history, inasmuch as, in defiance of the Tycoon, who was dallying with the foreigners, he closed the Straits of Shimonoseki against British ships, threatening to fire on any that came within range of his guns. The youths remonstrated with their hot-headed chieftain, pointing out the futility of opposing force to Great Britain. 'The thing to do,' they said, 'is to beat England on her own ground. We must learn to build ships, sail ships, and fight them in a fleet of our own. Then we shall be able to keep our coast inviolate.'

They volunteered to go to England, spy out the land, master the secret of naval supremacy, bring it back to Japan, create a fleet, and then let boastful Western nations look to themselves.

In 1858, when this project was submitted, it seemed childish in its audacity. As we know, it has been literally realised. Under great difficulties, suffering much privation, the two young men made their way to London. They had not been there more than three months when they were convinced of the helplessness of the attitude their Prince had assumed towards the mighty Western islanders. Returning home, for lack of money working their way

before the mast, they counselled the Prince to make terms with the British. But they were more truly representative of Japanese opinion when, eight months earlier, they secretly left their country in search of methods that would enable them to trample on the foreigner. Their old friends regarded them as traitors and sought to take their lives. Ito went into hiding. Inouyé, falling into the hands of the angered Samurai, was slashed with swords and left for dead by the roadside. To this day he bears on his face a memento of the terrible night.

In 1894 we visited Capetown, and were for three weeks the guests of Cecil Rhodes. On Christmas Eve 1902, on the invitation of Sir Alfred Moloney, Governor of Trinidad, we set out on a voyage to the West Indies. Before settling down at Government House, Trinidad, we stayed a week with Sir Robert Llewelyn, Governor of the beautiful island of Grenada.

Our third visit to the United States, paid in the winter of 1903, was planned in response to an invitation from Sir Thomas Lipton to be his guest on the 'Erin' during the race for the America Cup. We had made some preparations for the voyage, when it chanced one afternoon in July I met Mr. Choate, the American Minister, at the house of Mr. White, Secretary to the Legation. He had heard of our intended journey and strongly dissuaded us from going to New York in August, the month in which the race was to be run. His graphic picture of its horrors in the hot weather made such an impression that we resolved to forgo Sir Thomas's hospitality and the pleasure of the boat race, deferring our visit by a couple of months. For this we were ever grateful, since we not only had better weather, but were present through the interesting turmoil of a general election and were at Washington on the opening day of the new Congress.

I have somewhere read or heard it said that the world-wide popularity of 'Punch' is damped in the United States. It is explained that American humour so entirely differs from British taste that Americans do not appreciate *Punch*. I can testify that, if it be true Mr. 'Punch' has no vogue in the United States, the reception accorded to one of the humblest of his young men is incomprehensible. Desiring a little quiet and rest before commencing our tour, we went straight off from the wharf to Larchmont, to the country house of a friend some twenty miles distant from New York. We left no address behind, and looked forward to

at least a few days' seclusion. We counted without the host of New York papers. All the Sunday journals had columns reporting interviews with 'Toby M.P.' and other innocent material for sensational articles.

On Sunday one of the news editors of the 'New York Herald,' by some occult means, traced us to our hiding-place. New York was already in the throes of the election. The afternoon caller brought a courteous message from the editor to say that preliminaries of the election campaign would be in full force on the following evening, and he desired to place at my disposal a motor car and a member of his staff to show me round the city. This was exceedingly kind. I reflected with embarrassment that no leading London paper would pay a similar attention to an American journalist *en tour*. I gladly accepted the offer, was driven through the Bowery and other densely populated quarters, observing with interest the animated scene. When my personal conductor brought me to the railway station to catch the last train for Larchmont he remarked, quite incidentally, that perhaps I should be able to write a special signed article for the 'Herald,' describing my experiences and impressions. Here was the little plot disclosed. This was the explanation of the marked attention and the well appointed motor car. Not disposed to spoil sport, I wrote the article and promptly received a cheque in payment.

Among the questions showered upon me by the eleven reporters who awaited my arrival on the wharf one demanded instant definition of the grounds of difference between English and American humour. Oddly enough, of a series of articles the 'Herald' commissioned me to write one was on this interesting but abstruse topic. Probably the question is put to every literary man landing on the American shore.

From Larchmont we went on a visit to Mr. Whitelaw Reid's country house, modestly named Ophir Farm. In the stateliness of its outward appearance it reminded one curiously of Windsor Castle. The interior presents realisation of absolute luxury controlled by good taste. When shown to my dressing-room I thought, from its proportions, furnishing, and general adornment, that I had strayed into one of the smaller drawing-rooms. I marvelled when some months later I heard that Mr. Whitelaw Reid had accepted the post of American Minister at the Court of St. James's, a position that involved his quitting this perfect home lodged in a woodland whose wildness cultured taste left almost untouched. Another

charming visit we paid—indeed, there were two, for we were asked again—was to Burke Cockran's house on Long Island. Nothing could exceed the hospitality of the New Yorkers, it being extended in many cases by people I met casually at luncheon or dinner.

With the Chinese Minister I was the joint guest at one of the famous Lotus Club Saturday night dinners. As I knew a speech would be expected, and the occasion being one of exceptional distinction, I was at pains to write out some choice sentences. When speech-making began I observed that those who contributed to it not only did not read from manuscript, but had not a scrap of notes. When the Chinese Ambassador, immediately preceding my turn, talked at ease in excellent English I felt ashamed of the manuscript in my breast coat pocket. Called upon to respond to the toast of the evening, I talked for a few minutes. What I said did not provide anything approaching the elegance of the secreted literary extract. It was, I fancy, much better received than would have been the manuscript.

Another banquet given for me was spread at the Union Club, my host being Colonel Harvey of 'Harper's.' It was a small but interesting company. A neighbour on my right was W. D. Howells, a happy accident that gave opportunity for a friendship renewed and cemented when later he visited this country in search of material for one of his delightful books.

Killery Point: October 16, 1906.

DEAR MR. LUCY,—It has been the greatest pleasure for my daughter and me to hear from you, and we recognise Mrs. Lucy's hand in your kindness. When my article reappears in book form I will send the volume to you, hoping that the passage left out of the magazine through an editorial exigency will not seem too personal to your 'haddock and potatoes.' We remember nothing pleasanter in all our English experience than our lunch with you at White-thorn, unless it was our lunch with you in London.

We have been here by the sea ever since May, but we are going back to New York in a fortnight. We shall all be in a hotel till January, when my daughter goes to Bermuda, which she loves almost as much as England. Of course England is bigger, but the climate is better in Bermuda. If England were only two days off, like the other island, we should all go, in spite of your winter, and we should certainly come as near to Hythe as Folkestone. Hythe is one of our homes, and when we are anywhere else we are in exile—partially at least.

We are in the glory of our Fall weather, but it is sad glory, and I shall not be sorry to turn my back on the red leaves, though New York does not tempt me. This is a good place to work; but I think I have worked enough, and I only wish New York would play with me.

My wife wishes to join my daughter and me in love to you both, who are so often in our minds and on our tongues. My daughter says to tell Mrs. Lucy that she has adopted her fashion of tying flowers into little bunches, as the only way to make them stand up together in a bowl.

No, we never got your letter at Genoa, but we will forgive its loss if you will write us another from Hythe.

Yours sincerely,

W. D. HOWELLS.

A gentleman at the end of the table in the course of the dinner moving up till he sat in a chair next to me, insisted upon my bringing my wife to stay the week-end at his country house. We went and had a delightful time. On returning to New York we found awaiting us at the station his motor car, placed at our disposal for what remained of the day. I mention this as one of the instances of spontaneous and abounding hospitality of New Yorkers. Two ladies whom we had never met before our arrival took it in turns to send their carriage to take Mrs. Lucy a drive whenever she was at liberty. For myself I attempted, I confess ineffectually, to draw the line at suppers. We were left to breakfast at the Waldorf, our headquarters. Thereafter there were luncheons, teas, early dinners, the theatre or opera, with supper to follow either, at Sherry's or Delmonico's.

One night at the latter hostelry, pressed to partake of a quite unnecessary meal, I bethought me of a Welsh rarebit as combining the maximum of tastiness with the minimum of bulk. At the end of half an hour the waiter brought in with a flourish a covered dish, which he placed before me. I found on tasting it something resembling the upper leather of a tanned shoe passed through a meat mincer, flavoured with much mustard, and temporarily subjected to the influence of a red hot salamander passed over its surface. I suppose it was the first time in the history of this famous supper room that a Welsh rarebit had been asked for. But Delmonico was not to be done. The upper leather of an old shoe—tan being of course selected on account of

its colour—was as nothing. So I had my Welsh rarebit. Thereafter I took what my host provided.

XX.

PARLIAMENT AND THE PRESS.

I HAVE incidentally alluded to an action for libel brought against Mr. 'Punch,' with the result that he was cast in damages to the tune of 300*l.*, an incident rare, if not unique, in his long and honourable career. *Mea culpa*. The action arose upon the publication of what purported to be the 'Life and Recollections of Sir John Robinson,' long-time manager of the 'Daily News.' Having read the book I formed the opinion that from a literary point of view it was a poor performance. Other reviewers in the principal journals arrived at and expressed the same conclusion. I, jealous for the posthumous fame of my old friend and colleague, expressed my opinion with what I fear was excessive frankness and directness of speech. Anyhow the jury took that view, with the result recorded. In a leading article the 'Spectator' had the following comment on a case of permanent interest to the literary world :

It is not 'Punch' only, or Mr. Lucy only, that is hit by this verdict, and by the law which in effect it sets up. Reviewing is only a by-product with our contemporary, and Mr. Lucy's reputation has been made in other fields. The real sufferers are those journals which make the reviewing of books an integral part of their ordinary work. The process now is that the editor sends out a book to the reviewer whom he thinks best fitted to give an informing account of the object the writer has proposed to himself in writing it, and of the degree in which he has achieved it. The reviewer is trusted to form his opinion honestly, and to express it with proper frankness. If the law remains unchanged [as it was settled in the judgment and verdict in the 'Punch' case], a cautious editor will be compelled to look at each book for himself, to form a rough, and very possibly an inaccurate, estimate of its value, and to send out only such books as he sees his way to praising. The reviewer will have to be told to leave the book unnoticed unless he thinks well of it, and the columns of the journal will present a dull uniformity of commendation. Editors will suffer, reviewers will suffer, readers will suffer, and in the long run authors will suffer.

I volunteered to pay one-half of the damages, a novel procedure not likely to establish a precedent. With the working journalist it would be neither popular nor convenient. However, that is my affair. I mention the matter solely for the purpose of recording and explaining a movement that took place in the House of Commons as soon as the verdict was returned. I suppose most members had read the incriminating article, and followed the course of the

evidence given in court. The consequence was a determination that I should not suffer pecuniarily. As the result of conversation in the Smoke Room, on the Terrace, and other resorts, Colonel Mark Lockwood, one of the most popular men in a series of successive Parliaments, was asked to take the post of treasurer of an indemnity fund. He readily consented, but pointed out that the compliment would be more valuable if it were devoid of anything suggestive of politics. He was a prominent member of the Unionist Party. It would be well if a joint treasurer were appointed in the person of a member of the then Opposition. The point was readily conceded, and Mr. William Jones, a Welsh member of uncompromising Radical principles, was joined with the Colonel in the friendly undertaking.

The time was unpropitious. The month of August had been entered on, and after a laborious Session many members had left town on holidays more or less distant. Nevertheless the movement promptly met with gratifying success. The original intention, set forth in the circular issued by the joint treasurers, was to invite only 'Toby M.P.'s' personal friends in the House of Commons to subscribe. The matter was, however, quickly taken up in the House of Lords, many peers sending in subscriptions unsolicited. With the object of widening the area of sympathisers subscriptions were limited to one guinea.

The personality of the subscribers added largely to the value of the generous testimony. In the first list of the joint treasurers, including one hundred names, were those of the Speaker (Mr. Lowther), the ex-Speaker (Viscount Selby), the Prime Minister, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Ritchie), the Colonial Secretary, the Minister of Agriculture, the Postmaster-General, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education, the Secretary to the Local Government Board, the Solicitor-General for Ireland, the Solicitor-General for England, Mr. Asquith, K.C., Mr. Fletcher Moulton, K.C., Mr. Haldane, K.C., Mr. Robson, K.C., the Duke of Argyle, Mr. Chamberlain, the Marquis of Ripon, the Earl of Crewe, Viscount Ridley, Lord Rothschild, Lord James of Hereford, Lord Rathmore, Lord Burnham, Lord Denman, Sir Henry Fowler, Sir Edward Grey, Lord Monkswell, Mr. Bryce, Sir Arthur Hayter, Sir Charles Dilke, and Lord Hugh Cecil.

Such a demonstration, emanating from so wide, diversified, and distinguished a source, more than compensated for the worry

and expense entailed by the law proceedings. It was the more valuable and gratifying since, whilst through the more than thirty years I had been daily and weekly discoursing about Parliamentary affairs, I had never concealed my opinion about personalities, never been false to my political conviction, never modified expression of either save at the dictates of good taste.

In the affair I recognise a leading impulse in the respect and esteem with which my august master, Mr. 'Punch,' is regarded in Parliamentary circles. Any portion of the kindness that may have overflowed in my personal direction is hereby gratefully acknowledged.

In the spring of the following year (1904) I received other evidence of the personal friendship of a large body of members of the House of Commons. Having retired from the post of Parliamentary Summary writer to the 'Daily Telegraph,' assumed when, in 1890, the 'Daily News' passed under new proprietorship, I found myself at the opening of the session without the right of entrance to the Press Gallery. The rules which govern admission to that sanctum are as unintelligent as they are arbitrary. Half a century ago, when the English Press was something quite different from the institution of to-day, admission to the Gallery was limited to the London morning papers. Each had allotted to it two boxes, one for the leader and summary writer, the other for the reporting staff. The 'Times' had, and to this day retains, three boxes. When, on the cheapening of the telegraph service, the country Press grew in power and in number, establishing London offices and engaging London staffs, pressure was brought to bear on the authorities of the House of Commons to provide accommodation in the Press Gallery. After long resistance this was conceded, by taking in a portion of the members' side galleries and the construction of ten additional boxes.

This was an innovation calculated to make the typical Serjeant-at-Arms turn in his family grave. Whilst the concession to modern development was grudgingly made there was rigidly preserved the old tradition that admission to the Press Gallery was obtainable only by men directly representing the papers on the official list. The last eight years have seen the birth and growth of the halfpenny morning paper. In some instances circulation, according to uncontradicted declaration, to-day far exceeds that of any of the older papers recognised in the Press Gallery. Yet I, representing one of these, having undertaken to contribute a

daily article throughout the Session, found myself not only without a box in the Press Gallery but my name was struck off the Lobby List, at the head of which it stood by seniority. The halfpenny morning papers directly concerned have with cynical effect since put this matter right by buying up morning papers of old standing in London and the provinces, with the result that they now have something equal to one-half of the whole accommodation of the Press Gallery from which they were at the outset excluded.

Meanwhile, in order to perform my work in connection with quarters wide apart from the 'Daily Express,' it was necessary that I should have access during the sittings both to the Press Gallery and the Lobby. I confess it seemed reasonable, as in the event it proved to be the opinion of a large section of the House of Commons, that the hard and fast rule might in my case have been varied, the freedom of the Press Gallery and the Lobby, enjoyed over thirty years, being confirmed on personal grounds. Assuming that the Gallery was provided as a means of securing information for the public of what went on at Westminster, it seemed absurd to put up the bars against one whose daily and weekly circle of readers was probably equal to the aggregate of ten ordinary holders of Gallery tickets.

However the existence of such a rule saves trouble to the constituted authorities. They entrench themselves behind it when occasion arises. Thus it befell that I was shut out from any part of the House, except that open to the ordinary stranger. On this becoming known I had within the space of a single week communications from between seventy and eighty members offering to ballot daily for places in the Strangers' Gallery, so that I might be secure of entrance. The Speaker, whilst pointing out that the jurisdiction of the Press Gallery rested not with him but with the Serjeant-at-Arms, gave instructions that whenever there was room below the Strangers' Gallery on the floor of the House I should be passed in by the doorkeeper without the necessity of making formal application for admission.

This still left untouched the question of my exclusion from the Lobby, a serious impediment to performance of my daily work. Having failed in other quarters, I appealed direct to Mr. Arthur Balfour, then Prime Minister. He approached the Speaker, who at once decided to create a precedent, giving me access to the Lobby, not in accordance with the rule as representative of a particular paper, but in my own name.

In communicating the decision the Speaker graciously wrote :
 'I have been very glad to have been able to maintain the policy of the open door for you. To have closed the door would have caused an eclipse of the gaiety of Parliament ; or, to speak more accurately, it would have shut out those little shafts of light with which you daily and weekly pierce our Cimmerian darkness.'

XXI.

A LECTURING TOUR.

IN 1897 the Directors of the Crystal Palace, desiring to pay a tribute to Queen Victoria on the sixtieth anniversary of her coming to the Throne, projected a series of lectures upon various features of her long reign, to be delivered by experts in the concert room. At the instance of Sir Arthur Otway, sometime Chairman of Ways and Means in the House of Commons, I was selected to treat the subject of the Parliaments of the Victorian era. I could not plead that I was 'unacquainted with public speaking,' having suffered it through many Sessions. But I had never appeared on a public platform and did not recognise in myself aptitude for the position. Sir Arthur Otway was encouraging and insistent, and I yielded.

Instinctively feeling that the insufficiency of the lecturer demanded exceptional attraction in the person of the chairman, I wrote to Sir William Harcourt, asking him to preside. He replied :

7 Richmond Terrace, Whitehall :
 January 22, 1897.

DEAR LUCY,—My real desire to do what you wish makes me, *multum reluctante*, consent to your proposal, though I practise an inexorable veto against public functions of all kinds outside the House of Commons during the Session, and am obliged to accommodate the burden to aged limbs. As regards public ceremonies and speeches I feel, as in the case of war, if they must come sooner or later, better later, and if we are to throw stones in a glass house I think May more propitious than March. Therefore if I should happen to be alive I will do my possible to sit—not stand—by you on May 12.

Yours sincerely,

W. V. HARCOURT.

On the approach of the, to me, eventful day reports appeared in the newspapers notifying that Sir William was confined to his

room by illness. These were confirmed by receipt of the following letter :—

MY DEAR LUCY,—You are aware that an influence over which I have no control has disabled me from all the offices of public duty and personal enjoyment. It is a real disappointment to me to find myself deprived of the opportunity of assisting in the character of one of the oldest inhabitants at your lecture on the House of Commons. I feel sure it will be a most interesting and instructive reading in comparative anatomy by an experienced physiologist, who is well acquainted with the body politic it will be his business to dissect. We who are your subjects recognise in your kindly hand the art of a skilful surgeon who knows how to operate on his patients under anaesthetics without pain. A critic without malice and a reviewer without prejudice is a character on which the House of Commons may congratulate itself, and by whom it may profit. Humour, above all good humour, is the salt of life, and you have set the example in applying to politics this excellent antiseptic.

Yours very sincerely,

W. V. HARCOURT.

Only a few days were left for me to seek another chairman. Mr. G. W. E. Russell, an old Parliamentary hand whose premature withdrawal from the arena of the House of Commons has been to its distinct disadvantage, kindly stepped into the breach. I was more sorry for him than for myself at the result of the enterprise. The hall, which may be well enough as a concert room, is a gloomy sepulchre of ordered speech. It was not more than half full, and, as those on the back seats could only partly hear, there was no approach to enthusiasm. We got along somehow. George Russell made a cheery speech. As for me, having among few natural gifts endowment of something of the mental habit of Mark Tapley in adverse circumstances, I betrayed no discomfiture. Perhaps I was buoyed up by reflection on the fact (a consolation not shared by my chairman) that, in addition to the fee paid by the Crystal Palace Directors, the editor of the 'North American Review' had paid me 50*l.* for the manuscript of the lecture, which was published in two successive numbers of his magazine.

Amongst the audience, unknown to me, was a gentleman whose presence had important influence on subsequent events. He was the manager of the leading London Lecture Agency, and was so far favourably impressed with the discourse that he asked me to permit him to obtain for me engagements to deliver it in various

parts of the country. As the lecture season falls during the Parliamentary Recess, I, under the impression that the enterprise would involve some six or eight excursions, left the matter in his hands. Before the season opened he had booked over forty engagements in London and the provinces, a considerable number of invitations coming from Scotland.

It was pretty hard work, there being rarely a day's intermission from a railway journey with a lecture at night. The tour actually took the form of a series of visits to the town and country houses of friends. I do not think that through the long course of travel I more than three times put up at an hotel. There was perhaps a tendency to kill one with kindness. Invariably my host made the visit occasion for a banquet, to which he bade a considerable number of guests. This was not the best preparation for delivery of a lecture of upwards of an hour's duration. It was kindly meant and was certainly pleasant.

My difficulty was to fit in the invitations showered on me by the kindness of friends. One I particularly regretted having to decline is conveyed in the following note :—

Belmont Castle, Meigle, Scotland : November 16.

MY DEAR LUCY,—Only to-day have I seen in the local papers that you are going to lecture in Dundee on Friday. You will therefore be within three-quarters of an hour of us ; and what you are to do is to come here on Saturday morning and stay. Why should you not stay over the Harcourt festival next week ? He is coming here on Monday night, and reposes here until the anvil is ready on which his hammer will fall on Thursday, to the confusion of all timid people and the delight of all who love a row. You are not wanted anywhere else at this time of year. Judging by the contents of the papers, they might as well be written anywhere as in London. Why not do your 'Pall Mall' gossip from here ? You may become even a 'mere outsider,' and copying his fashion predict on Monday what you will announce on Friday as having happened on Thursday.

If you are wise and bring Mrs. Lucy with you, underline all I have said, for everything would be doubled, from our pleasure downwards. And she might come here on Friday, in anticipation of you ; for I am sure she can forego the pleasure of listening to your thunder on Friday. Do come.

Yours always,

H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN.

Lord Rosebery, ever hospitable, telegraphed asking me to stay at Dalmeny during the visit to Edinburgh. I was already pledged to be the guest of Lord Robertson, then Lord Justice General of Scotland, who, breaking through a habit long enforced by official duties, consented to appear on a public platform in Edinburgh, presiding at the lecture delivered in the hall of the Institute. Later, lecturing at Epsom, Lord Rosebery sacrificed his dinner hour at the Durdans in order to take the chair, when he delivered a sparkling speech on the Houses of Parliament. Under such aegis the faults of the lecture and the demerits of its delivery were overlooked. The tour proved an unexpected success.

Lord Robertson, who has permanently crossed the Tweed to take his place in the House of Lords, where he ranks as Lord of Appeal, has the distinction of first bewildering, then delighting that august assembly. He too infrequently takes part in debate. When he rises he commands an audience which pays him the compliment of steadily increasing numbers.

Speaking in the first portion of the current Session on a Government Bill involving (I think) the compulsory purchase of Scottish land, he asked the House to suppose that an analogous measure had been brought in affecting a London suburb.

'There might,' he continued, 'be expected to come forward a householder who said, "I am, although perhaps it is not I who should say it, a model of all civic virtues. And yet my villa is going to be taken from me." In amplification of his claim to be a person of the highest virtues he might go on to say, "I am a member of the National Liberal Club, a teetotaler, and a passive resister. I have recently married my deceased wife's sister, and none of my children have been vaccinated."'

Noble lords dozing on back benches, and others entering at the moment when Lord Robertson with artfully raised voice and emphatic manner declaimed these accumulative peculiarities of a pragmatic Radical, for a moment thought that here was public confession of infirmity openly made, a sort of breaking of 'The Silence of Dean Maitland.' The apprehension was only momentary, and was followed by an explosion of mirth whose hilarity was unfamiliar in the staid circle.

(To be continued.)

FOR A VISITORS' BOOK.

TO THE LADY OF THE CASTLE.

'HE who fears the trial,
Naught can hope to gain';—
Shall I make denial
À la Châtelaine ?

Come then, MUSE, and lend me
All that poets feign;
Let my verse commend me
À la Châtelaine !

. . .

TIME, that rarely lingers,—
TIME, that churl ingrain,—
Kisses courtier fingers
À la Châtelaine ;

Leads her by soft places,
Free from stone and stain ;
Spares his sterner traces
À la Châtelaine !

. . .

Ah ! benign, caressing,
Still, O TIME, remain ;
Send thy chiefest blessing
À la Châtelaine !

Make her sorest troubles
Light as summer rain ;
Crosses be but bubbles
À la Châtelaine !

Neither mar nor mend her,
Save her toil and pain ;
TIME, be always tender
À la Châtelaine !

AUSTIN DOBSON.

*MARIETTA'S MIRACLE: A FOOTNOTE TO
HISTORY.*

HISTORY would undoubtedly be more historical, to put it that way, if one waited long years to write it. Yet, when he has chanced upon its strange materials in the making, it is hard for even the professedly unhistorical writer to resist the temptation of setting down some record of it. What follows may be called fiction, if you like; for indeed the facts cannot be guaranteed. Though the dates are most modern, already the story has the vague, misty quality of a legend.

Sometimes one comes to feel in Rome that a romantic legend is far better than the facts. Yet facts there are which puzzled students of Italian politics have found difficult to understand, and this tale has the merit at least of offering some explanation of them. Most readers, even those ordinarily taking no interest in Italian politics, will remember the period when a measure (commonly called the Forieri Bill, after the famous man who introduced it) threatened still further confiscations of Church properties, and restrictions upon the priesthood more than ever vexatious to all devout Catholics. For a time dissensions such as we have seen racking France seemed to threaten Italy. In the towns there were noisy meetings, and in the streets rioting where rival processions bearing the red flag of Socialism and the banners of some pious confraternity met. In the country, in the lonely districts where the country-folk still look to the parish priests for guidance, there were uprisings; and in Rome strange rumours of some grotesque peasant army, carrying scythes and antiquated firearms and singing canticles, which was threatening to march upon the city and drive the deputies from their seats in the chamber. In the remoter parts of the Campagna itself it was said that the shepherds had attacked the carabinieri, and that the green country which rolls down in great waves towards the city and St. Peter's dome from all the mountains around was again, after many years of peace, dangerous to travellers. A fanatical priest made an attack on Forieri as he drove to Monte Citorio one day, and his friends grew nervous lest his very life was not safe. Indeed, all the length of

the peninsula there was thunder in the air, and the flash of hot prejudices and passions lit up fitfully a darkening sky. Then when it seemed that the storm must break, as the Ministry was preparing to force the Forieri Bill through the chambers, one memorable day when the whole country waited to hear the final discussion, an amazing thing happened. Signor Forieri himself threw all his influence upon the side of conciliation, and in a lofty and impassioned speech supported some of the most important amendments to his own measure. The sensation his action created was almost inconceivable. By the reactionaries he was hailed almost as one reconverted, a humble sinner returning with a broken spirit to the fold; by his own secularising party he was denounced as a traitor who had sold himself to the Vatican, or if not that as a madman. A thousand explanations were given of his change of face, and at first it almost seemed that his action would only increase the bitterness of the conflict. But in the end his unblemished record and the essential honesty, high-mindedness, and nobility of his long public career produced the effect they merited. He was eloquent too, with a kind of emotional quality which his speaking had lacked before, on the beauty of tolerance, on the right of man to his beliefs, on the foolhardiness of judging in what ways God is to be sought and found. The Forieri Bill, when it was finally passed, was no longer a warlike measure. The clouds scattered and the blue sunlit sky which ought always to arch over the Italian land was seen again.

So much is definite history, which everyone knows, and it is not the purpose of this tale to comment on Italian politics. We have to deal with Forieri himself and the mystery of his change of heart. Again one must try to suggest how Rome is for ever the most romantic city in the world; how its most modern happenings seem to take on a strange colour and light from the wreckage of dead centuries that lies everywhere. Pagan and medieval Rome can never be forgotten, and now, even when electric trams clang about its foot, most of all the great palace of the Vatican, standing guard by St. Peter's and looking out upon the noisy modern quarters, seems still to hold mysteries in its thousand rooms, to throw a spell of romance over all the city and the country round. The life of that strange, shabby Papal Court is never quite known to the Romans who sit for ever in the great gorgeous, fading rooms of their palaces, gossiping in half-hushed tones about the Pontiff and those who surround him. Around the figure of the 'prisoner

of the Vatican ' legend is for ever twining new growths, and never more than at the time of this story. Even the Church's enemies admitted that there was something fragrant and lovely in the simplicity of the new occupant of St. Peter's chair ; that his legend, as it grew in the rich old Roman soil, must be that of a saint, with some of that primeval freshness that clings about the stories of the first Franciscan brothers. Here was a man who had never wished for advancement, and when it came bore it with such patience and meekness as he could. There was a gently humorous story of how he, coming to the conclave which finally elected him, had been the only one of all the Cardinals who had taken a return ticket. There were tales later of how, surrounded by the pomps and ceremonials of his Court, by the cardinals whom, it was said, he compared to Solomon's ' lilies of the field ' ; overwhelmed with diplomatic negotiations, troubled to heart-breaking almost by this now-threatened attack upon the remaining strongholds of the Church, he longed unceasingly for his peaceful bishopric and his cathedral, sitting by the lapping waves of the Venetian lagoon, or even, going further back in memory, for the simple cottage where he lived a black-robed parish priest. There were accounts of moments of revolt against that self-imposed imprisonment which had become so fixed in the Papal policy, and even whispers of surreptitious sorties from the Vatican. Once by night in a slum of Trastevere a strange priest, so two old women asserted, appeared in the chamber of a poor Venetian girl who had come to Rome to die, and the room shone with a sudden shimmering glory as she gasped out her last prayer. Shepherds on the Campagna were said to have been visited one day of early springtime by an old man with snow-white hair, who took a little girl of six tenderly upon his knees and, though he was in the shabbiest cassock, gave her, as he left, five gold pieces wrapped in a ragged wisp of newspaper. These half-believed stories seemed to draw everyone nearer to that hidden central figure of the Church, to the dear, simple man who would gladly fly from the splendour of that great palace to the lonely fields where the birds sang, where the spring flowers grew and the wind blew fresh from the Alban hills. The peasants on the mountains, and above all the shepherds on the Campagna, had felt a new emotion of personal love and loyalty added to their pious veneration. Now it seemed as if to the very gates of that crumbling Aurelian wall swept a tide of protest against what that new progressive, unbelieving Rome within, speaking by the mouth of

Forieri, planned. Yet it was to this rolling, green Campagna, this lonely country peopled only by a few fanatical enemies of himself and all he stood for, that Forieri himself fled one April afternoon, leaving an important stage of the discussion of his Bill in the Chamber to take place without him, and seeking under that bright wind-swept sky some consolation, some momentary escape from the turmoil of politics, at least some poor chance to be alone with his anxieties and sorrows.

In the morning a telegram had come from his wife at Castellamonte, a remote hill-town on that southern slope of the Alps that looks over the vast plain of Piedmont. Here, while he had been working incessantly in Rome for the success of his dearest political project, she had been watching for almost a month through the days and the long nights by the bedside of their only child. She had known what the strain of the struggle must be in Rome. She had written hopefully, cheerfully, determined to bear alone the agony of fluctuating hopes and fears, so long as hopes there were. But now she had sent a despairing, imperative telegram. Marietta was dying. Her father must come at once if he was to say good-bye to her. She was crying because he was not there.

This word came in the morning. He could have been at Turin by midnight, at Castellamonte as the sun rose. But while he was away the crucial moment would come in the discussions at Monte Citorio. Perhaps on his presence in the Chamber that day depended success or failure. Perhaps, yielding to the cry of his heart for one last sight of his child, meant failing, just when he counted, in duty to his friends and to that Italy which he loved, which had the right, so he had often told himself, to ask of her children the sacrifice of their private happiness, even their private sorrows. Forieri, had he been just the father of the little Marietta who lay dying, might have flown to Castellamonte on those distant hills; but Forieri the public servant, the repository of a great party's hopes and fears, must stand at his post. So he had decided in the morning, after a long struggle with himself. He telegraphed a long explanation to his wife. And at first he had almost unconsciously added the words, 'I am praying God that she may live.' Then silently he had crossed them out. To his wife his lack of faith had long been a bitter sorrow, borne silently. Now he feared that to cast the expression of his hopes in this old form would somehow seem a mockery to her. And she at least, he knew, would be on her

knees. If a divine aid could save their little girl, it would not be refused to her mother's prayers.

The morning had passed; it had grown too late to catch the Turin train. Then, as sometimes happens when it is too late, reaction came and frantic unreasoning sorrow. Had it now been possible, Forieri would have given up everything to be by that poor little bedside with Marietta's hand in his. To the little town on its distant Alpine slope there was, he knew, only one train a day. It would be useless to start till the following morning. But then, so he promised himself, he would leave. The morrow with its final discussion which was to decide the fate of his momentous Bill counted as nothing; to-day, if possible, less. When a note came from a political associate referring to events expected in the Chamber that afternoon itself, he tore it up unanswered. His seat, to the astonishment of everyone, remained vacant. His secretary, at home, could give no information as to his employer's whereabouts. He only knew that about noon a second telegram had come saying that little Marietta was sinking rapidly. The father, with a half-inarticulate cry, had caught up a hat and left the house. Forieri himself could scarcely have told more, nor even explained how it was that towards the late afternoon he found himself striding over the rolling turf that lies between the fountains of the Acqua Santa and Villerano.

He must have been tramping for long hours, without food since early morning. Quite suddenly utter physical exhaustion must have seized on him, and a sense of the long distance he had come from Rome. Towards five he came up to a wattled shepherd's hut and asked that someone be sent to the Via Taralena in the city to fetch back his carriage. He scratched a few words on his visiting card—an official one, as it chanced—and giving it to the messenger, sat down to rest. It is the first definite thing that can be known of his movements since he rushed from his house when that second telegram from the north made the tumult in his heart and brain unbearable.

No messenger arrived in the Via Taralena. None, it is probable, was ever despatched. Down the valley a little way there are three more huts, and in one of them was a girl who had been in service in Rome for two years and could read. Thither the card was carried; there the suspicions aroused by the name were confirmed. At Rome a third telegram had come, saying that the little Marietta was near her end. At Monte Citorio the deputies of

his party clamoured for their leader. By Vallerano, Forieri lay on the turf. Nearer the fountains of the Acqua Santa a little group of *contadini*, keeping a furtive watch up the valley from the doorway of a wattled hut that the tired wanderer should not escape, discussed his fate. For this odd turn of events had concentrated the problem of all Italy in this one green corner. Here the town and the wild Campagna faced each other. Here sharp-eyed unbelief was opposed by the half-savage piety of an earlier age. Nothing could make clearer how the crisis brought on by Forieri had stirred the land in its remotest recesses than that his name should be known here, that it should be spoken with curses. Something of the scene I can guess at. I have talked with Luigi Cerano, who works on a farm near by and, I believe, was there.

The light was fading, and already dim within the hut. In one corner there was a garish coloured lithograph of the Crucifixion, and before this an ancient crone had put a little lamp of oil and was on her knees, mumbling prayers. But the eyes of everyone else were on an old man with matted grey hair and a frenzied, half-mad look, who was pouring forth a stream of inflammatory appeals to the younger shepherds not to neglect this opportunity which God and His saints above had given them of saving the Church. At first, Luigi Cerano proposed, so he maintained afterwards, that Forieri should be held a prisoner, and was called a coward and half-hearted for his pains. Later, as God had willed it, he found that he had worn a knife at his belt. If he had not, there was a second old woman in the hut who had been whetting a scythe through all the old man's talk. About six they started up the valley. The pleasant spring night was closing in, the distant view of St. Peter's dome had faded. Yet across the deserted green Campagna the great church may perhaps to their ignorant desperate minds have seemed to send a kind of blessing upon their sinister errand. One of them went stealthily ahead and, returning, reported that Forieri had gone within the hut. They went forward then at a faster pace until they were within perhaps thirty yards of it. Then suddenly the man ahead stopped. Some instinct perhaps it was that had warned Forieri of his danger. At any rate he came to the door of the hut and, seeing them, stepped out into the open and stood facing them. There was a moment's hesitation, and then, with a kind of hoarse cry, the old man with matted grey hair broke from the little group and, with a scythe lifted in a great menacing curve above his head, rushed at Forieri. The rest followed,

but none went more than half the distance. In the dim half-light a gentle voice called out :

'Poveretti, my poor children, what is it you do ?'

It was to be full moon that night, and a great golden disc was just rising over a slope to the left. Silhouetted against it they saw the black-robed figure of a priest, a priest at this strange hour in a deserted region where so rarely any priest came. The streaming moonlight made his white hair gleam like a silver halo as he came slowly down towards them.

'Poveretti, poveretti,' he murmured again in a voice that caressed them though it seemed breaking with tears.

'It is Forieri, father,' the half-mad old man cried. *'It is he who would crucify Christ a second time !'*

The priest made no answer. He came forward towards them ; stood among them at last. Afterwards they said that a light that was not all the moon's seemed to follow him. He took the scythe very gently and put it on the ground, and then held out his hands for what the others carried. Luigi Cerano gave up a knife that had cost him thirty soldi at Frascati, Easter Day. When he came the next morning to search for it it was gone, so he swears. Scarcely knowing why, the little company found itself kneeling. The unknown priest seems to have said something like a little collect for peace in the vulgar tongue, and then to have dismissed them, signing the cross above their heads. They started slowly down the valley, wondering at their own quick obedience, marvelling at the way in which all hate seemed to have gone out of them, moving in what was to them like a strange waking dream. It was not till then, so it seems, that the unexplained visitor turned towards Forieri. He went towards the hut, and the moonlight streamed full upon his face.

'Santo Padre !' Forieri cried, so they swear, and then a kind of unexpected terror seized on all the shepherds, and they fled. One of them turned and saw the two men, Forieri and the priest, go into the hut together. Later in the night someone is reported to have seen a carriage with two horses and a sleepy coachman in shabby livery waiting in a dip in the road to Ostia. It is supposed that the two men went back together to Rome.

What was said in the hours that intervened is what one would most like to know. In this strange, uncouth setting one of the world's momentous conferences took place, with no witnesses to report it if the great participants in it chose to keep silence. Forieri

himself has not talked, and the Church guards the secret well. Rome's imagination, of course, tries to reconstruct the scene, as might our own. Did the two men go straight to that problem of the nation that lay so near the hearts of both? Or had the moment of danger, the savage episode just passed, moved them to talk more of themselves? Is it possible that they spoke of how both had sought refuge in the loneliness of the Campagna from the cares that burdened them? Is it possible that each came to see in the other a simple, honest man, striving, as his light guided him, for the good of the poor suffering world around him? One would like to think that this was one of those hours when strange surroundings and intense new feelings somehow fuse the barriers that often divide good men from each other, and that these two saw each other face to face. But our legend deals little with discussions of high politics; as legends do, it seizes upon the simple, the obvious, the concrete. It would have it that the talk was all of poor little Marietta, dying upon that distant mountain-side, sobbing her heart out because her father was not there. It tells only of the father bowed to the earth in despair, and the priest calling on him to look for help to Heaven. It suggests that in a moment of almost frantic inspiration the priest prevailed on the father to join with him in a prayer for direct intervention from above, a cry for some sign from God that His mercy still flowed down upon men through the chosen ministers of His Church. It does not go so far as to say that there was a bargain between the two, yet no one can fail to realise how the fate of great issues was ventured when Forieri, the atheist, the Church's enemy, asked help from unknown powers.

It is at Castellamonte that the legend bursts into full flower. At Rome it is known that Forieri somehow came home that night and found a fourth telegram from his wife. Marietta, so it said, had suddenly found the strength to fight off death. Her father might now safely stay in Rome; might now give all his heart to that other child of his, his great new measure for Italy. In what an unexpected way he did this everyone knows; it is, as has been said, matter of history. For some hint of explanation one must still turn to Castellamonte. Castellamonte knew that at ten that night a sleepy telegraph operator had been routed out of bed to send the message of rejoicing. But it knew more than that.

It was about the time the moon rose, lighting up the mists of the great plain of Piedmont that lies stretched out below the

mountain slope, that Marietta seemed nearest her end. The Villa Forieri lies a mile or so outside the little town. The unhappy mother had despatched a servant to bring the priest from the village to the dying child's bedside. She stood in the little *loggia* outside the sick-room, peering anxiously along the road to the right, although she knew it was impossible that Father Bancini should come so soon. Suddenly she looked to the left: she could not have told why, and here the light from the great golden disc of the moon was pouring over a little ridge. Almost silhouetted against it she saw the black-robed figure of a priest, a priest she had never seen before, his white hair gleaming like a silver halo as he came slowly towards the house. A minute later the bell clanged, and Signora Forieri herself rushed across the little garden to the gate.

The moonlight almost seemed to have followed him and to cling about him. It was an unknown face. Yet there was something hauntingly familiar about it. He smiled.

'*Figliuola mia*,' he said. 'My little daughter, you have a sick child here.'

'Did you come from Castellamonte? Is Padre Bancini ill?' she asked hesitatingly.

'Perhaps the good God sent me,' was the answer, and the strange priest smiled, a queer caressing smile. 'Shall we go up to the little Marietta?'

It was not till afterwards that it struck her as unexplained that he should know the name.

They went together to the sick-room, and the old man knelt by the child's bedside. She had been lying in a kind of stupor, but now she half raised herself on one arm and, with a wondering smile trembling on her pale little lips, gazed straight in his eyes.

'Your father sends his love, and says you must get well.'

She smiled, and lay back on her pillows with a little sigh of relief.

'Yes, I must,' she said, 'mustn't I, mother?'

Then, kneeling there, they prayed, the strange priest, the mother, perhaps the little Marietta, and old Annunziata, who had prayed by a bedside when Marietta's mother was born. It is old Annunziata most of all who has helped to make the legend grow. It is she who asserted that as the old priest prayed a light that was not moonlight filled the room, that she smelled the faint odour of incense, and that far below in the shimmering plain of Piedmont

she seemed to hear the sound of many church bells ringing joyfully. It is she who started the story, though we need not believe her, of an odd look of someone who could not possibly have been there in the strange priest's face. Yet, curiously enough, no one in Castellamonte or the region around seems to have seen Signora Forieri's visitor either before or after that night, or even during it. But they all are ignorant, superstitious people. Annunziata herself is very old ; perhaps one cannot quite trust her. It would very likely have been better to stick to the historical facts ; yet somehow, for me, the legend makes the study of history pleasanter.

HARRISON RHODES.

mountain slope, that Marietta seemed nearest her end. The Villa Forieri lies a mile or so outside the little town. The unhappy mother had despatched a servant to bring the priest from the village to the dying child's bedside. She stood in the little *loggia* outside the sick-room, peering anxiously along the road to the right, although she knew it was impossible that Father Bancini should come so soon. Suddenly she looked to the left: she could not have told why, and here the light from the great golden disc of the moon was pouring over a little ridge. Almost silhouetted against it she saw the black-robed figure of a priest, a priest she had never seen before, his white hair gleaming like a silver halo as he came slowly towards the house. A minute later the bell clanged, and Signora Forieri herself rushed across the little garden to the gate.

The moonlight almost seemed to have followed him and to cling about him. It was an unknown face. Yet there was something hauntingly familiar about it. He smiled.

'*Figliuola mia*,' he said. 'My little daughter, you have a sick child here.'

'Did you come from Castellamonte? Is Padre Bancini ill?' she asked hesitatingly.

'Perhaps the good God sent me,' was the answer, and the strange priest smiled, a queer caressing smile. 'Shall we go up to the little Marietta?'

It was not till afterwards that it struck her as unexplained that he should know the name.

They went together to the sick-room, and the old man knelt by the child's bedside. She had been lying in a kind of stupor, but now she half raised herself on one arm and, with a wondering smile trembling on her pale little lips, gazed straight in his eyes.

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HARRISON RHODES.

'THE BOX OFFICE.'

BY HIS HONOUR JUDGE PARRY.

Ah ! let not censure term our fate our choice,
 The stage but echoes back the public voice ;
 The drama's laws, the drama's patrons give,
 For we that live to please must please to live.

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

I HAVE a vague notion that I wrote this paper on the Box Office in some former existence in the eighteenth century, and that it was entitled 'The Box Office in relation to the Drama of Human Life,' and that it was printed in the Temple of the Muses which was, if I remember, in Finsbury Square.

But it is quite worth writing again with a snappy, up-to-date modern title, and in a snappier, more up-to-date and modern spirit, for as I discovered, to my surprise, in talking the other day to a meeting of serious playgoers, the Box Office idea is as little understood to-day as ever it was. All great first principles want re-stating every now and then, and the Box Office principle is one of them, for, like many of the great natural forces which govern human action, it seems to be entirely unappreciated and misunderstood.

Speaking of the actor and his profession, I pointed out that the only real test of merit in an actor was the judgment of the Box Office, and that therefore an actor is bound to play to a Box Office and succeed with a Box Office if he wants to continue to be an actor.

The suggestion was received with contempt and derision. No artist, I was told, no man of any character would deign to think of so low a thing as the Box Office. All the great men of the world were men who had had a contempt for the Box Office, and the Box Office is, and must in its nature be, a lowering and degrading influence. This opinion seemed so widely held that I decided to hold an inquest upon my original suggestion, and the result of this, I need hardly say, was not only to confirm me in the view that I was entirely right, but to convince me that my neighbours were

sunk in the slough of a dangerous heresy, in which it was my duty to preach at them whilst they slowly disappeared in the ooze of their unpardonable error.

There is something essentially English in the very name of the institution—the Box Office. About the only thing an average Box Office cannot sell is boxes. When it begins to sell boxes the happy proprietor knows that, in American phrase, he has 'got right there.' But every sane manager, every sane actor, and all sane individuals who minister to the amusement of the people, close their ears to the wranglings of the critics and listen attentively to the voice of the Box Office. The Box Office is the barometer of public opinion, the machine that records the *vox populi*, which is far nearer the *vox Dei* than the voice of the expert witness.

Before discoursing of the Box Office in its widest sense, let us return for a moment to the case of the actor. Here the Box Office must, in the nature of things, decide his fate. It is the polling booth of the playgoer, and it is the playgoer and not the critic who decides whether an actor is great or otherwise. Why do we call Garrick a great actor? Because the Box Office of his time acclaimed him one. Davies tells us how his first performance of Richard III. was received with loud and reiterated applause. How his 'look and actions when he pronounced the words,

Off with his head : so much for Buckingham,

were so significant and important from his visible enjoyment of the incident, that several loud shouts of approbation proclaimed the triumph of the actor and satisfaction of the audience.' A modern purist would have walked out of the playhouse when his ear was insulted by Cibber's tag; but from a theatre point of view it is a good tag, and I have always thought it a pity that Shakespeare forgot to set it down himself, and left to Cibber the burden of finishing the line. The tag is certainly deserving of this recognition that it was the line with which Garrick first captured the Box Office, and it is interesting that the best Richard III. of my generation, Barry Sullivan, always used Cibber's version, for the joy, as I take it, of bringing down the house with 'so much for Buckingham.' Shakespeare was so fond of improving other folk's work himself and was such a keen business man, that he would certainly have adopted as his own any line capable of such good Box Office results.

Throughout Garrick's career he was not without critics, and envious ones at that; but no one to-day doubts that the verdict of the Box Office was a right one, and it is an article of universal belief that Garrick was a great actor. Of course one does not contend that the sudden assault and capture of the Box Office by a young actor in one part is conclusive evidence of merit. As the envious Quin said: 'Garrick is a new religion; Whitfield was followed for a time, but they would all come to church again.' Cibber, too, shook his head at the young gentleman, but was overcome by that dear old lady Mrs. Bracegirdle, who had left the stage thirty years before Garrick arrived. 'Come, come, Cibber,' she said, 'tell me if there is not something like envy in your character of this young gentleman. *The actor who pleases everybody must be a man of merit.*' The old man felt the force of this sensible rebuke; he took a pinch of snuff and frankly replied, 'Why faith, Bracey, I believe you are right, the young fellow is clever.'

In these anecdotes you have the critic mind annoyed by the Box Office success of the actor, and the sane simple woman of the world laying down the maxim 'the actor who pleases everybody must be a man of merit.' And when one considers it, must it not necessarily be so? An actor can only appeal to one generation of human beings, and if they do not applaud him and support him, can it be reasonably said he is a great actor? If he plays continually to empty benches, and if he never makes a Box Office success, is it not absurd to say that as an actor he is of any account at all?

So far in the proceedings of my inquest it seemed to me clear that in setting down the Box Office as the only sound test of merit in an actor, my position was indisputable. Of course there were, and are, Box Offices and Box Offices. Cibber, Quin, Macklin, and Garrick appealed to different audiences from Foote. An actor to-day has a hundred different Box Offices to appeal to, but the point and the only point is, does he succeed with the Box Office he attacks? Moreover, the more Box Offices he succeeds with, and the wider the public he can amuse, the better actor he is. Garrick knew this when, in the spirit of a great artist, he said: 'If you won't come to Lear and Hamlet I must give you Harlequin,' and did it with splendid success.

How was it, then, when the thing seemed so clear to my mind, there should be so many to dispute this Box Office test? The more one studied the attitude of these unbelievers, the more certain it

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seemed that their unbelief arose in a great measure as Cibber's and Quin's had arisen, namely from a certain spirit of natural envy. It is obvious that not every one of us can achieve a great Box Office success, and that many men who live laborious lives, without much prosperity of any kind, not unnaturally dislike the success that an actor appears to attain so easily. But the suggestion that Box Office success is or can be largely attained by unworthy means is, it seems to me, a curious delusion of the envious, insulting to the generation of which we are individuals, inasmuch as it suggests that we are easily deceived and deluded, and exhibiting unpleasantly that modern pessimism that spells—or should we more accurately say smells?—degeneration. Garrick's career is an eloquent example of the fact that a real Box Office success can only be attained by great attributes used with consummate power, and that pettiness and meanness, chicanery and bombast are not the methods approved of by the patrons of the Box Office.

Of course it will be said by the envious 'This man is a great success to-day, wait and see what the next generation think of him.' But why should a man act or paint or write for any other generation but his own? Common sense suggests that many men can successfully entertain their own generation, but that only the work of the rare occasional genius will survive in the future. Luckily for all artists of to-day, this is and always was a law of Nature, equally fortunate for artists of the future that nothing that is being done to-day is in the least likely to interfere with the workings of that law in days to come.

There is undoubtedly a tendency—and probably there always has been a tendency—to infer that because a man is rich therefore he is lucky, and that a man who is successful is very likely a dishonest man; indeed, it seems a common belief that to gain the verdict of the Box Office it is necessary to do that which is unworthy. This idea being so widely spread, it appears interesting to study the Box Office in relation to other scenes in the human drama. What part does it play, for instance, in politics, in literature, or in art?

Of course a writer or painter is in a somewhat different position from an actor. He can, if he wishes, appeal to a much smaller circle, or, in an extreme case, he can refuse to appeal at all to the generation in which he lives and make his appeal to posterity. The statesman, however, is perhaps nearer akin to the actor. Let us consider how statesmen and politicians have regarded the

Box Office, and whether it can fairly be said to have exercised a bad influence on their actions.

And as Garrick is one of the high sounding names in the world of the theatre, so Gladstone may not unfairly be taken as a type of English politician, and it is curious that the whole evolution of his mind is chiefly interesting in its gradual discovery of the fact that the Box Office is the sole test of a statesman's merit, that the *vox populi* is indeed the *vox Dei*, and that the superior person is of no account in politics as against the will of the nation. As in the theatre, so in politics, it is the people who pay to come in who have to be catered for. In 1838 Gladstone was as superior—'sniffy' is the modern phrase—about the Box Office as any latter-day journalist could wish. He complimented the Speaker on putting down discussions upon the presentation of petitions. The Speaker sagely said, 'that those discussions greatly raised the influence of popular feeling on the deliberation of the House; and that by stopping them he thought a wall was erected—not as strong as might be wished.' Young Mr. Gladstone concurred, and quoted with approval an exclamation of Roebuck's in the House: 'We, sir, are, or ought to be, the *élite* of the people of England, for mind; we are at the head of the mind of the people of England.'

It took over forty years for Gladstone to discover that his early views were a hopeless form of youthful conceit and that the only test of the merit of a policy was the Box Office test. But when he recognised that the *élite* of the people were not in the House of Commons, but were really in the pit and gallery of his audiences, he never wearied of putting forward and explaining Box Office principles with the enthusiasm, and perhaps the exaggeration, of a convert.

Take that eloquent appeal in Midlothian as an instance:

We cannot (he says) reckon on the wealth of the country, nor upon the rank of the country, nor upon the influence which rank and wealth usually bring. In the main these powers are against us, for wherever there is a close corporation, wherever there is a spirit of organised monopoly, wherever there is a narrow and sectional interest—apart from that of the country, and desiring to be set up above the interest of the public, there we have no friendship and no tolerance to expect. Above all these and behind all these, there is something greater than these; there is the nation itself. This great trial is now proceeding before the nation. The nation is a power hard to rouse, but when roused, harder and still more hopeless to resist.

Now here is the Box Office test with a vengeance. Not in its soundest form, perhaps, because the really ideal manager would

have found a piece and a company that would draw stalls and dress circle as well as pit and gallery. For Bacon says: 'If a man so temper his actions as in some of them he do content every faction, the music will be the fuller.' But Gladstone at that time had neither the piece nor the company, and, great artist as he was his music did not in later years draw the stalls and dress circle but having mastered the eternal Box Office principle, this did not disconcert him, for he knew that of the two the pit and gallery were sounder business for a manager who wanted to succeed in the provinces and was eager for a long run.

This recognition by Mr. Gladstone of the Box Office as supreme comes with especial interest when you consider that his education and instinct made it peculiarly difficult for him to appreciate the truth. Disraeli jumped at it more easily, as one might expect from a man of Hebrew descent, for that great race have always held the soundest views on questions of the Box Office. As a novelist, the novels he wrote were no doubt the best he was capable of, but whatever may be their merits or demerits, they were written with an eye to the Box Office and the Box Office responded. His first appearance upon the political stage was not a success. The pit and gallery howled at him. But this did not lead him to pretend that he despised his audience, and that they were a mob whose approval was unworthy of winning; on the contrary, he told them to their faces that 'the time would come when they would be obliged to listen.' A smaller man would have shrunk with ready excuse from conquering such a Box Office, but Disraeli knew that it was a condition precedent to greatness, and he intended to be great. He had no visionary ideas about the political game. As he said to a fellow-politician: 'Look at it as you will it is a beastly career.' Much the same may be said in moments of despondency of any career. The only thing that ultimately sweetens the labour necessary to success is the Box Office returns, not by any means solely because of their value in money—though a man honest with himself does not despise money—but because every shilling paid into the Box Office is a straight testimonial from a fellow-citizen who believes in your work. Disraeli's Box Office returns were colossal and deservedly so—for he had worked hard for them.

When you come to think of it seriously, the Box Office principle in the drama of politics is the right for that drama's patrons to make its laws, a thing that this nation has contended for through

the centuries. Indeed, there are only two possible methods of right choice open: either to listen to the voice of public opinion—the Box Office principle—or to leave affairs entirely to the arbitrament of chance. With sturdy English common sense we have embodied both these principles in an excellent but eccentric constitution. We allow public opinion to choose the members of the House of Commons, and leave the choice of members of the House of Lords entirely to chance. To an outside observer both methods seem to give equally satisfactory results.

In political matters we find that for all practical purposes the Box Office reigns supreme. No misguided political impresario to-day would plant some incompetent young actor into a star part because he was a member of his own family. We may be thankful that all parties openly recognise that any political play to be produced must please the pit and gallery, and that any statesman actor, to be a success, must play to their satisfaction. No one wants the stalls and dress circle of the political circus to be empty, but it would be absurd to let a small percentage of the audience exercise too great an influence on the productions of the management.

As in politics, so in business, for here no sane man will be heard to deny that the Box Office test is the only test of merit. If the balance sheet is adverse, the business man may be a man of culture, brain power, intellect, sentiment and good manners, but as a business man he is not a success, and Nature kindly extinguishes him and automatically removes him from a field of energy for which he is unfitted. It is really unfortunate that one cannot have a moral, social, and literary Bankruptcy Court, where, applying the Box Office test, actors, authors, artists, and statesmen might file their petitions and be adjudged politically, or histrionically, or artistically bankrupt, as the case might be, and obtain a certificate of the Court, permitting them to open a fried-fish shop, to start a newspaper, or to enter upon some simpler occupation which, upon evidence given, it might appear they are really fitted for.

It is the vogue to-day for those claiming to possess the literary and artistic temperament to shrink with very theatrical emphasis from the Box Office. They point out how the Box Office of to-day overrules the Box Office of yesterday, forgetting that the Box Office of to-morrow may reinstate the judgment of the inferior Court. Even if the Box Office is as uncertain as the law, it is also as powerful as the law. Of course a painter or writer has the ad-

vantage over the actor—if it be one—of appealing to a smaller Box Office to-day, in the hopes of attracting a large Box Office to-morrow. A man can write and paint to please a coming generation, but a man cannot act, or bring in Bills in Parliament, or bake or brew, or make candlesticks for anyone else than his fellow living men. Not that, for myself, I think there have ever been many writers or artists who wrote and painted for future generations. On the contrary, they wrote and painted largely to please themselves, but in so far as they cared for their wives and children, with an eye on the Box Office, and in most cases it was only because their business arrangements were mismanaged that their own generations failed to pay to come in. These failures were the exception. The greatest men, such as Shakespeare and Dickens, were immediate Box Office successes—others were Box Office successes in their own day, but have not stood the test of time. Nevertheless, it is something to succeed at any Box Office, even if the success be only temporary. Every man cannot be a Prime Minister, but is that any reason why he should not aspire to a seat on the Parish Council? When one turns to the lives of authors and artists, one does not find that the wisest and best were men who despised the test of the Box Office.

Goldsmith had the good sense to 'heartily wish to be rich,' but he scarcely went the right way about it. One remembers Dr. Johnson sending him a guinea, and going across to his lodgings to find that his landlady had arrested him for debt and that he had changed the guinea for a bottle of Madeira. Dr. Johnson immediately makes across to the bookseller and sells the 'Vicar of Wakefield' for sixty pounds. The Box Office test absolutely settled the merit of the book in its own generation and from then until now. One may regret that Goldsmith reaped so poor a reward and that is what so constantly happens, not that the Box Office test fails to be a true test at revealing merit, but that, owing to superior business capacity, a very inferior author will for a time reap a bigger reward than a better author. This is generally the result of bad business management, and the cases even of authors and artists who are not discovered in their own lifetime, and are discovered by future generations, are rarer than one would suppose. It is an amusing modern craze among the *cognoscenti* to assess the ability of a writer or an artist of to-day by the mere fact alone that he has few admirers of his own generation.

If one were to investigate the lives of great writers and painters,

one would find, I think, that the majority wrote and painted for money and recognition, and that the one reward they really wished for was a Box Office success.

Dickens, who is perhaps the healthiest genius in English literature, writing of a proposed new publication, says frankly :

I say nothing of the novelty of such a publication, nowadays, or its chance of success. Of course I think them great, very great ; indeed almost beyond calculation, or I should not seek to bind myself to anything so extensive. The heads of the terms on which I should be prepared to go into the undertaking would be—that I be made a proprietor in the work, and a sharer in the profits. That when I bind myself to write a certain portion of every number, I am ensured for that writing in every number, a certain sum of money.

That is the wholesome way of approaching a piece of literary work from the Box Office point of view. But Dickens well understood the inward significance of Box Office success and why it is a thing good in itself. As he puts it in answering the letter of a reader in the backwoods of America :

To be numbered among the household gods of one's distant countrymen and associated with their homes and quiet pleasures ; to be told that in each nook and corner of the world's great mass there lives one well-wisher who holds communion with me in spirit is a worthy fame indeed, and one which I would not barter for a mine of wealth.

Dickens's Box Office returns brought him a similar message from hundreds and thousands of his fellow-men to that contained in the letter from the backwoods of America, and though in the nature of things such messages can only come in any number through the Box Office, Dickens understood the meaning of a Box Office success and had too honest a heart to pretend that he despised it.

Thackeray was of course absolutely dogmatic on the Box Office principle. He rightly regarded the Box Office as the winnowing machine separating chaff from wheat. He refused to whimper over imaginary men of genius who failed to get a hearing from the world. One of the first duties of an author, in his view, was that of any other citizen—namely, to pay his way and earn his living. He puts his cold sensible views into the mouth of Warrington reproving Pen for some maudlin observation about the wrongs of genius at the hands of publishers.

What is it you want ? (asks Warrington). Do you want a body of capitalists that shall be forced to purchase the works of all authors who may present themselves, manuscript in hand ? Everybody who writes his epic, every driveller who can and can't spell and produces his novel or his tragedy—are they all to come and find a bag of sovereigns in exchange for their worthless reams of paper ?

Who is to settle what is good, bad, saleable or otherwise? Will you give the buyer leave in fine to purchase or not? . . . I may have my own ideas of the value of my Pegasus, and think him the most wonderful of animals, but the dealer has a right to his opinion, too, and may want a lady's horse, or a cob for a heavy timid rider, or a sound hack for the road, and my beast won't suit him.

One cannot have the Box Office principle more correctly stated than it is in that passage. Nearly all the great writers seem to be of the same opinion and for the same reasons, and without being such a 'whole-hogger' as Dr. Johnson, who roundly asserted that 'No man but a blockhead ever wrote except for money,' it seems undoubted that the motives of money and recognition have produced the best work that has been done.

Nor do we find that the painter is in this matter less sensible than his artistic brethren. The late Sir John Millais expresses very accurately the sensible spirit in which all great artists attend to the varied voices of critics as against the unanimous voice of the Box Office.

I have now lost all hope of gaining just appreciation in the Press; but thank goodness 'the proof of the pudding is in the eating.' Nothing could have been more adverse than the criticism on 'The Huguenot,' yet the engraving is now selling more rapidly than any other of recent times. I have great faith in the mass of the public, although one hears now and then such grossly ignorant remarks.

The artist then gives instances of public criticism in other arts with which he disagrees; but the only matter that I am concerned with is that in his own art, and for himself, he has arrived at the Box Office conclusion that the proof of the pudding is in the eating.

I have searched through many biographies in hopes of finding the writer or artist who was wholly uninfluenced by the Box Office. If he existed, or was likely to exist, he would be found, one would think, in large numbers among those well-to-do folk who have ample means and could devote their lives to developing their genius and goodness solely for the good of mankind. It must seem curious to those who despise the Box Office to find how little good work is achieved by men and women who are under no necessity of appealing to that institution for support.

If I had been asked to name any writer of my own time who was absolutely free from any truck with the Box Office, I should, before I had read his charming autobiography, have suggested Herbert Spencer. For indeed one would not expect to find a Box Office within the curtilage of a cathedral or a laboratory. Religion

and science and their preachers have necessarily very little to do with the Box Office.

But Spencer was not only a great writer, but a keen scientific analyst of the facts of human life. He could not deceive himself—as so many of the literary folk do—about his aims and objects. Looking back on the youthful valleys of his life from the calm mountain slopes that a man may rest on at the age of seventy-three, he asks himself

What have been the motives prompting my career?—how much have they been egotistic, and how much altruistic? That they have been mixed there can be no doubt. And in this case, as in most cases, it is next to impossible to separate them mentally in such a way as to perceive the relations of amount among them. So deep down is the gratification which results from the consciousness of efficiency, and the further consciousness of the applause which recognised efficiency brings, that it is impossible for anyone to exclude it. Certainly, in my own case, the desire for such recognition has not been absent.

He continues to point out that this desire for recognition was 'not the primary motive of my first efforts, nor has it been the primary motive of my larger and later efforts,' and concludes, 'Still, as I have said, the desire of achievement, and the honour which achievement brings, have doubtless been large factors.'

It is very interesting to note that a man like Herbert Spencer recognises what a large part the Box Office played in his own work—work which was rather the work of a scientist than the work of a literary man.

In the modern education and in the Socialist doctrines that are preached, emulation, competition, and success are spoken of almost as though they were evils in themselves. People are to have without attaining. Children and men and women are taught to forget that 'they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize.' It is considered bad form to remember that there is a Box Office, that it is the world's medium for deciding human values; and that to gain prizes it is necessary to 'so run that ye may obtain.'

These old-world notions are worth repeating, for however we may wish they were otherwise, they remain with us and have to be faced. And on the whole they are good. Success at the Box Office is not only to be desired on account of the money it brings in, but because it means an appreciation and belief in one's work by one's fellow-men. In professions such as the actor's, the barrister's, the politician's, and to a great extent the dramatist's, and all those

vocations where a man to succeed at all must succeed in his own lifetime, the Box Office is, for all practical purposes, the sole test of merit. The suggestion—a very common one to-day—that a man can only make a Box Office success by pandering to low tastes, or indulging in some form of dishonesty or chicanery, is a form of cant invented by the man who has failed to soothe his self-esteem and to account pleasantly to himself for his own failure. A study of the lives of great men will show that they all worked for the two main things, popular recognition and substantial reward, that are summed up in the modern phrase Box Office.

It may be that in some ideal state the incentive to work may be found in some other institution rather than the Box Office. It is the dream of a growing number of people that a time is nearly at hand when the Box Office results attained by the workers are to be taken away and shared among those high-souled unemployables who prefer talking to toiling and spinning. Such theories are nothing new, though just at the moment they may be uttered in louder tones than usual. St. Paul knew that they were troubling the Thessalonians when he reminded them 'that if any would not work neither should he eat,' and he added, 'for we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.' St. Paul makes the sensible suggestion 'that with quietness they work and eat their own bread.' To eat your own bread and not someone else's, you must work for it successfully and earn it. That really is the Box Office principle.

OF A SPINNING-WHEEL AND A RIFLE.

BY J. H. YOXALL, M.P.

WISE persons going Savoywards, or the swallow-flight, break the journey at Dijon, which for an indolent halt is a very capital indolent halt indeed. And still wiser persons stop a day or two in Dijon, for Dijon of Burgundy is almost as fine an old dowager-duchess of a city as is Nancy of Lorraine. And one may kindly remember Dijon for many reasons. I remember Dijon for two in particular: for the finding of Captain Fluellen's baggage, and for the missing of a walnut spinning-wheel.

'Tis plain I was not in the humour the day I missed that spinning-wheel. Hobbinol, even Hobbinol my familiar, was powerless with me just then. For I am not the slave of Hobbinol, let me boast; there are hours, there are whole days when—but no matter. 'Go to!' I said to Hobbinol that Whitsun day, almost in the words of a certain poet who is not the Laureate, though he writes for the *Court Journal* by-the-by:

Go to! I will collect no precious thing
Inwrought of subtlest brain and deffest hand:
The young May sunshine warms th' awakened land,
The Spring is here—I will collect the Spring!

So when I saw in the window of a timber-fronted bit of old Dijon a delicately light and spindly spinning-wheel, as dainty an implement as ever was turned out of walnut for the fingers and toes of a Madame du Deffand, yet on sale for thirty-five francs only; and when Hobbinol said 'Absurd! Snap it up at once!' I said 'Absurd!' to him. 'How am I to get home an awkwardly packing concern such as that? Observe the enormously long distaff-thing, or whatever you call it! Go to, I will collect no spinning-wheel inwrought of subtlest brain and deffest hand!' And I didn't. And I have often repented it since. Alack, for our transient opportunities missed and our unavailing regrets!

The finding of Captain Fluellen's luggage was quite another pair of boots, however. Often I go to Dijon, and once when I was thinking

of going to Dijon my friend the Captain said, at the Club, 'There's a palace-tower at Dijon.'

'There is,' I agreed. 'Tower of the Hôtel de Ville.'

'No! Tower of the palace of the Dukes of Burgundy. It's a hundred and forty-four feet high,' he said. 'I know; I ought to know. I spent the best part of a hot October day on the top of that tower, worse luck!'

'Did you, indeed? But whatever on earth made you do it, my dear Fluellen? Up a gross of feet like that?'

'Superior orders,' he answered gravely. 'I was signalling, you see—orders from the Etat-major below.' And then I remembered; I looked at his handsome soldierly face that still wears the Louis-Napoleonic *impériale*, though that is snow-white now, and I remembered. I remembered that he, a Welsh Catholic of the *vieille roche*, in 1870 had fought for France.

'Exactly,' said I. 'Dijon has altered a good deal since then, don't you find?'

'I haven't seen it,' he said. 'I've never been near the place again. . . . Since you're going there shortly, however . . . you might——' He paused. 'I should rather like to know, after all,' he went on. Then he paused again.

'Anything I can do for you there, Fluellen——'

'Well,' he said suddenly, 'you might perhaps call at the Hôtel Sonnez for me, and see Madame, and ask if they've still got my baggage?'

'—???' I looked the query.

'My kit, you know; I left it there,' he said. 'We had to quit in a hurry. And I've never been near Dijon since.' Something came into his eyes just then—not tears, but rue, 'for remembrance,' and I looked out of window a moment, at the 'sweet, shady side of Pall Mall.' . . .

As I strolled about Dijon a few days after that I came to the Hôtel Sonnez, and stared at it; for the Hôtel Sonnez is quite a monster caravanserai, that you enter by a Palladian portal, and is clearly a good deal less than a generation old. Yet it is thirty—well, you can count the exact number of years for yourself, John Bull, since you made the cardinal and irretrievable blunder of letting the Goth triumph over the Gaul; it is a good deal more than a generation next October thirtieth since, from the top of the Ducal tower, my gallant friend Fluellen signalled down to the Etat-major the stages of General Werder's approach. I marched into that

magnificent hotel almost as cautiously as Werder did into Dijon, and screwing up my courage to address a magnificent *portier*, I asked for Madame Sonnez. He stared and I flinched like Mr. Toots; 'It is of no consequence,' I was about to say, retreating in a way that Werder would have scorned. But the magnificent *portier* spoke. 'It is Madame X now,' he said, quite mildly. 'Would Monsieur wish to see Madame X?'

Monsieur would. Monsieur did. And Madame X—dark, portly, pleasant, but fifty-five, I imagine—said, 'Oh, Monsieur, you mean my poor dead mother!'

'Dead, is she, poor lady?' I stammered. 'But, Madame... we never think old friends can die or change, do we? Captain Fluellen never reflected that Madame, your mother—'

'*Le Capitaine Fluellen!*' She interrupted me, she positively cried the name. 'The Capitaine Fluellen!' So correctly she pronounced the name that I guessed how well she must have learned it in the old days, how often she must have uttered it, and with inflections how caressing then. Now, as she said it again, and murmuringly, *her* eyes also filled full with rue and remembrance. 'Ah, Monsieur, I recall him well! He was of the most handsome, and of the most good... But as for his baggage—'

'Bother his baggage, Madame!' said I, but she refused to bother it. She bothered herself; she meditated; then she hunted in a drawer for a key, I protesting in vain. Diligently searching, she found. Perseverance had its reward. Her hand with the wedding-ring on it reappeared, and jutting out of that hand—for it was quite a small hand, by-the-by—I saw a key. 'If Monsieur will give himself the trouble to follow?' she said, with the sweet clearness which is in Frenchwomen's voices, and she led the way out at the back of the caravanseraï, and across a petrol-spotted paved yard, till we came to a low old building which used to be the Hôtel Sonnez in days when Fluellen lived there *en pension*, and Madame X was Mademoiselle. And there, within an otherwise empty room of that deserted hostel, she showed me a pell-mell lumber of mouldering trunks and peeling valises, rotting jackboots, and saddlery that sent forth an ancient and pigskinny smell. 'Perhaps the baggage of the brave Capitaine will be here,' she said. 'But, Monsieur, I do not know it from the others... If I had known it from the others'—she looked at me with eyes that hardly saw me—'if I had known it from the others, I should have—'

'Treasured it a little, perhaps—for the Captain's sake,' I said in a voice which, I hope, was full of sympathy, yet not *too* pitying.

For I had come to understand the story by then, and I was trying to see her as Fluellen must have seen her, neither portly nor fifty-five, nor wedding-ringed, all those years ago. 'Madame,' I said, 'let us bother the baggage! Ma foi, do you think it was for his baggage that he sent me here? Mais non, mais non, Madame, but simply to hear of you again—of the belle Mademoiselle!'

'Mon Dieu, Monsieur!' Colour had come into her clear pallor. 'Why, then, did he never come himself?' And indeed I could not tell her why, for Fluellen has always been a bachelor. But 'Wait till you come to Forty Year!' sang Thackeray the good and gentle, Thackeray the genial and wise, whom it takes a reader of forty year or more to read in the spirit:

Ho, pretty page, with the dimpled chin
That never has known the barber's shear,
All your wish is woman to win,
This is the way that boys begin,—
Wait till you come to Forty Year!

I had more than come to forty year when I went the second time to Mâcon; I shall not reveal how many years it is since I went there first. But it was *consule Planco* the first time, ay de mi! Eleven hours the train spent in crawling from Geneva in those days, I remember, and I broke the weary journey at Mâcon for a while. It was market-day, I remember, and a day of brilliant heat. Yokes of yellow oxen panted on the quays as I lounged on the bridge that hoops the slow Saône, and the market-folk fanned themselves with cabbage-leaves. Those market-women wore the most extraordinary and unaccountable head-dress ever seen. I say 'seen' and not 'to be seen,' for if you have never seen it you will never see it now; Parisian cast-off fashions have everywhere supplanted the antique local garb. But all those years ago the quaint Burgundian *coiffe* was visible anywhere in Mâcon. Fluellen must have seen it in Dijon, and known it again, though the very burlesque of a Welsh-woman's head-dress it was. Conceive a boy's fly-cage, made of a bottle-cork half-scooped away, and the aperture barred by inserted pins. Magnify that five times. Make the pins long ones and thick ones, with big black bead knobs to them, the knobs encircling the top of the cork like an effort by Martin Chuzzlewit in the Knobby order of architecture. Put the pins and knobs all round the cork. No flies inside, of course; the flies were all at the oxen. Now plant this choice confection quite centrally upon a disc of cardboard twice the diameter of the wearer's skull. Hang round the edge of the disc a valance of black lace, dropping three inches deep. Now pose

the whole arrangement on the top of the head. Heaven knows how they kept it on ; I don't remember, if I ever knew, but I dare say there would be chin-straps, or ribbons, or things. Of such was the Burgundy *coiffe*. When I went to Mâcon per motor-car the other day I could find no specimen of it anywhere, not even in the *Musée*.

There was something else I vainly looked for at Mâcon the second time. When I wandered through Mâcon the first time I came, as Mr. Pecksniff did, but less intentionally even than he, to the door of a Madame Gamp, and I joyed my then unpaternal eyes with the sight of the signboard over that door. Why, indeed, should Madame Gamp not flaunt a signboard ? And why should it not be one of *armes parlantes* ? The botanical theory of the origin of small human beings is no new one ; the gooseberry-bush hypothesis held good in England even when I was a child. In France that gooseberry-bush becomes a less fertile cabbage-patch, and the cabbage-patch theory explains to a French youngster why his mother calls him her *petit chou*. The picture on the signboard displayed Madame Gamp in her garden. Her foot upon a spade, and her whole considerable bulk bent hotly on her philanthropic effort, Madame Gamp was eradicating a giant cabbage, and there at the roots of it—do cabbages have roots, by-the-by ?—lay an infant, just unearthed like a new potato, but weeping as potatoes never do, though potatoes, too, have eyes. When I went to Mâcon again the other day I hunted for that signboard, but it was not. Gone are the years, gone are the fly-cages, gone are Madame Gamp and her signboard into the *Ewigkeit*, like Louis-Napoleon, General Werder, the black out of Fluellen's *impériale*, and the *svelte* grace of Mademoiselle. Gone, too, are the spinster ladies who kept the little bookshop at Mâcon on the Quai. Tenderly courteous and considerate for my blooming youth, they sold me with compunction a copy of *La Dame aux Camélias*, I remember, pressing me first and earnestly to purchase some more moral tale than that, for sleeping over in the long train to Paris. One's pathological pleasure in that tale has also gone. Lots of things, you see, are gone. *Sic transit. Tempus irreparabile fugit*. And the rest of it. But Mâcon is not gone ; the terraced old city still dozes on its hillside, though honking and tootling motor-cars rouse it for moments, every now and again.

Mâcon remains. If you are lucky, you may still see yokes of cream-coloured oxen come wagging over the bridge. The Saône remains, broad, flat, full, slow, a very bovine breed of river indeed ; grazing its way, so to speak, through endless buttercup

meadows, all the meandering miles down from the tiny old bourg of Gray. Slow and somnolent, the Saône; and yet of the Saône I can say, 'River, oh river of journeys, river of dreams!' It is here that I syncopate again, John; you will have noticed how guilty I am of syncopation. Or, rather, you will have noticed nothing of the kind, for 'syncopation' is a term of art, and what does John Bull know of music? Nothing, by common consent. Handel you know, and Mendelssohn may be, but what of the stormy Weber, the insane Schumann, the satirical Berlioz, or Chopin the neurasthene? To syncopate, a highly-respectable dictionary reminds me, is to commence a tone or note in an unaccented part of a bar and continue it into the following accented portion. Even so does the unaccentuated Saône lead us along to Gray.

Gray? Where is Gray? What was my surprise last year to find in a very pleasant guest and Goth—the Rektor of a Bavarian University—the only man I know who has ever been to Gray! My pleasant Goth from Erlangen has twice been to Gray, indeed; he went there first about the date when Captain Fluellen was still sunned in the honest smiles of Mademoiselle Sonnez de Dijon. Precisions will inform me that Erlangen is in South Germany, and that the Bavarian contingent never warred in Gaul so far north as Gray. May be, may be, Precisian; I will take your word for that. But my friend was not Rektor of Erlangen just then; he was a mere Pomeranian undergraduate and recruit from Tübingen. The second time he went to Gray it was to study, with an historian's eye, the ground he darkly fought over the first time he went to Gray; thus may we review our young misdeeds, self-pitying and time-mellowed. And when he went to Gray the second time he saw the great bronze *chassepot* there.

An excessive friend of mine collects old rifles, and makes his dining-room look like a non-commissioned officers' mess. He assures his guests that he owns a Baker, a Delvigne, a Brunswick, a Minie, an Enfield, a needle-gun, a Chassepot, a Snider, a Martini-Henry, a Mauser, a Gras, a Winchester, a Mannlicher, a Lee-Metford, a Lebel, and a what-not. He slings them chronologically, labelled with the names by which these toys for a young Apollyon are known, and they take away my appetite when I dine amidst their array. 'Tis the plague of his life that he cannot unearth an example of the original rifle, the old Adam and first father of all rifles, the crude and imperfect killing-tool which was all that Chrissom men had to content themselves with between Anno Domini 1498 and the

year of Our Lord 1631. As for myself, I should prefer a collection of spinning-wheels, and I might have made one by now had I taken that thirty-five franc chance at Dijon. But do not opine that I cannot let off a rifle. I can; I can make a bull, like any Irish Fusilier; I can hit the ball on the jet; I can ring the bell; I can perforate the card quite respectably. I am handier with a rifle than with a spinning-wheel; point of fact. But what a cold, hard, smooth-devilish thing a rifle is to be handy with, or to collect! Cold, hard, but not smooth is the great bronze *chassepot* on the Soldiers' Monument which the Rektor and I have seen at Gray. High set in bronze upon the pedestal of that touching memorial a shot soldier staggers, and his rifle falls; but it falls into the clutch of his boyish son.

La Revanche! That is still the fixed idea in Gaul; that is still the inhumane but human intention. You realise the cold hard smooth fixity of it when you come to the Gap in the Vosges, as from Gray you may quickly do. On a night of the Autumn manoeuvres, for instance, when the garrisons and Reservists are out from Toul and Langres and encamped upon the Plateau, you may realise the Gallic preparations for revenge, that last and dearest joy of the untutored soul. There lie the embattled hosts, at rest after rehearsal. At a telegram, a word of command, an affront to France, they would spring into 'magnificently stern array.' Meanwhile they rest, at nightfall. Listen!

Les diligen-ces
Part' pour Mayen-ce,
Bordeaux, Floren-ce
Et tous pays.

A little red-legged soldier wrapped in his fusty great-coat lies beside a bivouac fire on the Plateau de Langres, and hums to himself that old song. 'Les diligences partent pour Mayence,' do they? No diligences will ever depart for Mainz again, but those shining straight lines in the valley, those parallel bars, prepared as if for gymnastic uses and prolonged to apparent infinity, may carry armed travellers towards Mainz some day. Spreading out like the bones of a fan, to touch at twenty points the Gap in the Vosges, they run, those hard, smooth-devilish railways built for war, all for war. Grass grows hay-high between those rails; no train conveys a single civilian passenger or an ounce of peaceable merchandise along them. Idle they lie and grimly they wait, strategic iron roads built all for war; the motor-car cannot antiquate them or abolish their purposed use. The motor-car that takes the highway from Dijon to Sedan

goes through Domremy, and the troops that marched from Toul three days ago went swinging past the church where Jeanne Darc knelt in her ecstasy, and past the house wherein the Deliverer-girl was born. And 'Halt!' cried the colonels there. 'Port arms! Salute!' The sabres flashed in the beautiful curves and sway of that accolade, the rifles were raised and ranked like thurifers before a shrine. Deliverance for France again they dream of, do the Gauls, but not from English and Burgundians this time.

Thirty thousand red-legged *soldats* prepare for open-air sleep on the Plateau, and presently the last bugles sound. Solemn, virile, and *largo* is the music of the *extinction des feux*; poesy intense, fraught with charm and melancholy, breathes through that chain of slow, grave notes. They float across table-land and valley, they die upon the silent fields all blonde with stubble. Cover fires? There are fires of memory and emotion which are never extinguished in France. Think you that Madame X at Dijon has forgotten? 'Revenge?' Gambetta thundered, 'Think of it always, if you speak of it never!' Seldom do they speak of it in Gallia now, but they think of it still. They remember. The men who have come to forty and fifty year remember; and if the young soldiers on the Plateau cannot remember, they know. They have heard; their fathers have told them. They have seen the *Gloria Victis* statue at Bordeaux. And at Gray they have understood the meaning of the *chassepot*, falling from the shot Gaul's fingers into his son's young hand.

The curfew bugle is silent, the fires of the bivouac flicker down, the troops are already asleep; but as for the little red-legged *soldat*, still he wakes and still he hums. His feet as he lies point Eastward, Rhineward, Gothward, revengeward; over yonder is the Gap which admits to the fair province which France has lost. And listen again—he is humming again, this little red-legged, hot-headed young soldier; it is the *Sentinelles, veillez* of M. Fragerolles which he hums

Sentinelles au pantalon rouge,
A l'Est que vois-tu ?
Je vois un nuage qui bouge,
Vapeur de sang qui est perdue.
L'éclair y trace, en formes nettes,
De grands zig-zags de baïonnettes ;
Sentinelles, veillez !

Yes, he will watch. Nowadays, now that all the little nations in the world are emphasising themselves, shall not the Grande France ?

But the tardy moon has risen. It climbs to the edge of the

Plateau ; it looks down at the couchant myriads cast there in the mimicry of death. And the little red-legged fellow shivers, for the strewn plain and the death-pale moon remind him of the tale his father tells. Of when his father lay wounded on the deserted field of Sedan. Of how such a moon as that rose up and rested at the edge of the battlefield, distant but plain before his father's eyes. Of how—ah, strange and awesome sight !—forth from the moon a black thing seemed to spring, and to make towards him slowly ; a thing like a black bar that moved, that crept, that advanced ; a black bar short and narrow, straight marching out of the moon towards the sopping red spot where the soldier lay. Out of the eerie moon it seemed to come, straight, direct, inevitable upon him, and his fear shrieked aloud. But soon his hope cried out, for the black bar was a priest, a priest bare-headed, kilting his cassock and marching with reddened *souliers* across the awful wetness of the field ; a priest, breviary in hand, and chanting the *Miserere* and the prayer for the dying and the dead. . . . Just such a peeping moon as this one, and just such a man-strewn plain, the little red-legged fellow reflects ; and he himself, perhaps, forlorn little *soldat*, tawdry little tin soldier for the play-game of big children at Paris and Berlin, to lie as his father did, shell-torn at the thigh and sabre-broken in the arm, if war shall come again. And then for France—who knows ?—perhaps another Sedan. . . .

Sepulchrally the churchbell in the valley tolls ten, and the little red-legged fellow has fallen asleep at last. But near him a dragoon is dreaming ; he dreams that he rides, rides, rides, with flashing sabre and tossing horsehair plume. He has thought of *la revanche*, and he dreams that the chance is come ; he can speak of it now, he can shout of it—but he dreams that his troop is ill-marshalled, and he cries out a warning. '*Aux armes ! V'là l'ennemi ! Au secours, je vous dis, nom de Dieu ! V'là les Prussiens, je vous dis ! Apprêtez-vous ! Sabre-main—à gauche en bataille ! Au galop ! Char-r-r-gez ! Hourah !*' A sleepy corporal curses him into silence ; again there is deathlike quietude, and the mimicry of death once more.

That, or nearly that, is what one may hear on a night of the Autumn manœuvres, when one goes the rounds with one's *ami*, Major Leliene. And afterwards in the tent one talks of Fluellen, of Shakespeare's Fluellen, of the *nuances* there are in Shakespeare's Fluellen, and of how little those *nuances* can be understood by a Gaul or a Goth who does not understand the Welsh. For look you, as he himself would say, 'there is very excellent' *nuances* in Shakespeare's Fluellen. Is he not the arrant Welsh gentleman,

strange in his consonants but musical in his vowels and cadences ? 'Marvellous falorous,' hot as cayenne pepper, touchy as the sensitive plant, extravagant in hyperbolic speech, pedantic in erudition, and over-proud of his claims of long descent. Comic with the unconscious Welsh humour, that best of comicality. Pitiful and considerate for others, yet suddenly boiling and bubbling with rage on inadequate occasions, like a geyser. And even to his name—Fluellen, Thlewellyn—the Welshman, the Elizabethan Welshman, and also the Victorian Welshman to a t. 'All the waters of Wye cannot wash the Welsh plood out of his pody.' As a thumbnail sketch Fluellen's is the most perfect pen-and-ink portrait ever drawn ; I would know him again amongst a million on the thither Lethean shore. For may I eat the leek of the liar if one does not see his shade—a pale green, leek-green, it is in colour—any night when one walks about 'that famed Picard field' where he fought so well.

Battlefields of France, which generations of Madame Gamps have laboured to provide with food for powder—Agincourt where Fluellen did so valiantly, Poitiers, Crécy, Toulouse, Châteaudun, Dijon, Mars-la-Tour, St. Quentin, and endless others—multitudinous *champs de bataille* which something still seems to incarnadine—I have felt your horrible charm. Hobbino! and I have collected battlefields ; Gravelotte, I have traced the hoof-marks of your cavalry charge ; Sedan, I have trod your furrows flat. I have followed the flight of the miserablest of Napoleons, I have slept where he slept the night of disaster irretrievable, the very Pelion upon Ossa of defeat. And there at Bouillon, in an annexe of Godfrey's feudal castle, in the whitewashed *salles* of a petty Versailles, I have seen the names of Marie and Gretchen, Lina and Louise, scratched or pencilled on the whitewash by Gauls and Goths who lay side by side in a common pain and hospital, chumming together as they tried to talk to each other of their wives or sweethearts and their wounds.

Upon the hearts of the Maries and Gretchens, the Linas and Louises, the old clients of Madame Gamps who spin and knit, who watch and pray, the names of battlefields are writ deep, methinks. 'Trailst thou the puissant pike ?' Good ; but sometimes it were braver to smooth the distaff-wool and treadle the unending wheel. I think of Fluellen—*my* Fluellen, his white hair gleaming in the candlelight of the card-table at the Club, and I remember his day on the tower at Dijon. And then I think of Mademoiselle below, anxious and harried, heart-aching but *serviable*, waiting on gruff Gothic guests at her mother's inn—smiling with them, even, perhaps

—and all the while her thoughts, her honest love, her terrors out in the covertless fields of Burgundy with the escaping or perhaps unescaping and shot down Capitaine, ‘of the most handsome and the most good.’

I have never collected battlefields in Russia, nor seen the spot ‘a little beyond the west bank of the Dnieper’ where on a day of the Retreat from Moscow General Lejeune ‘sat down to rest on the trunk of a tree, beside a fine young artilleryman who had just been wounded.’ Two doctors happened to pass by, and Lejeune desired them to examine the wound. ‘His arm must be amputated at once!’ they declared, and Lejeune asked the young soldier if he could bear it. ‘Anything you like, mon Général,’ was the stout reply. ‘But there are only two of us,’ the doctors said, ‘so you, General, will be good enough to help us, perhaps?’ Lejeune was to let the poor fellow lean against him the while. ‘Sit back to back with him, sir, and you will see nothing of it.’ Lejeune did not see, but he heard; he heard the noise which the saw made as it cut through the bone. ‘Tis a pity we haven’t a little wine here to help him rally,’ the doctors said. ‘I happened to have half a bottle of Malaga with me,’ Lejeune recounted. ‘I was hoarding it up for my own use, a drop at a time, but I gave it to the poor fellow, who was looking terribly pale. His eyes brightened, at one gulp he emptied the flask, and then, returning it, “It is still a long way to Carcassonne!” he said, and walked on with a firm step, at a pace I could hardly follow.’

Such was the courage of Pierre the artilleryman, all Poland and Germany and half France away from his native Carcassonne—a long way indeed. But what of the heroism of Suzonne his wife, busy at Carcassonne with her spinning-wheel and her chickens, yet not so busy that she could not think, imagine, and dread all day and all night. ‘There! Now, if not before, he is shot! He falls dead! I really am a widow now—oh my child, you are fatherless!’ In war-time the passionate hearts of good women bleed worse, I think, than any amputated arm. Do you see brave Pierre the artilleryman, Pierre the *manchot*, tramping back over Poland, Germany, and half France to beautiful Carcassonne? I see Suzonne setting out with her child in her arms, to tramp towards Russia until she can know the truth, less torturing than her fears. And under all this feathered and gilded business of war I see the grim nursery-play of young Apollyons, who sneer at Madame Gamps and spinning-wheels, the while they toy with *chassepots* and with diabolic spitting shells.

THE GREAT FEVERSHAM.

'ONCE upon a time there was a man who had a small garden with a big ash tree in it. It was a good enough tree, but, like others of its sort, it prevented anything else from growing near it. This did not matter to the man when he first discovered the tree; but after a time it did matter, for it became imperative for him to grow cabbages. He thought once or twice he'd grow roses too, but they never came to anything at all. For the matter of that, the cabbages did not flourish either—that garden altogether was not much of a success; you see, the man tried to grow them under the ash tree. At last, however, he saw it was no good: either the cabbages or the tree must go: and as he could not dispense with the one, down came the other. After that he kept on growing cabbages more or less successfully all the rest of his life. Every now and then the ash tree sprouted and gave trouble, and had to be treated drastically; but it left off sprouting after a time, and at last it died. In the end, the man was rich enough to buy another garden for the cabbages; but by that time it did not matter, the ash stump was quite dead then.'

That was the story the Little Feversham told the Great Feversham one evening when the Great one had asked lazily for suggestions for a story. The Little one had first refused, saying he knew nothing of plots and stories now.

'But you used to write a bit yourself,' the Great Feversham objected.

'That's why I'm not giving you a plot,' the other answered; 'it would be no good to you.'

'Not as you gave it, perhaps, but it might suggest an idea; you used to give me help one way and another—you have rather a faculty for seeing, you know, though you do trudge the business round.'

The Little Feversham smiled; he was much older than the Great one—so much older that he did not mind the unconscious touch of patronage. 'You don't want my help now,' he said. 'And as for seeing—what should I see? It is all just meals, sleep, work in a groove for me *ad infinitum*.'

The other one knew it. 'I would not stand it,' he said, but half to himself.

'Perhaps not—perhaps not; you're young and successful—I'm not,' and the Little Feversham filled his pipe slowly, still smiling.

'You might have made a name if you had followed up your first success,' the younger brother said. 'I always wonder why you did not.'

'Why I didn't write another book? I did, and the fate that befell it was the fate it deserved: it failed.'

'And that was the end?' Plainly the younger man thought it strange to be content to accept defeat so. To him there was only one explanation of such a thing: the promise of the first book must have been an empty promise, with no power of fulfilment in the creating brain behind. He did not say this, but the other could guess what was in his mind.

'What does it matter? One of us has won success and honour for the name—what does it matter whether it is you or I?'

The man who had succeeded felt that it did matter to him, but he refrained from saying so, and for a little they smoked in silence. At length the elder brother took his pipe from his mouth. 'Did I ever tell you the tale of the cabbage garden?' he asked. 'It isn't a plot exactly, but it is a thing one sees.'

And he told the parable of the ash tree and the cabbages. And the Great Feversham in no ways comprehended it or thought it of much account. Which was precisely what the Little one wished; for he himself was the man with the garden, and the Great younger brother was one of the cabbages; and the ash tree—it was dead, and the ashes of the dead should rest in peace.

It was a good many years ago now that the ash tree was cut down; John Feversham was young then—young enough to believe that newspaper notices and a successful novel are fame. Glorious days those, when the world lies all before and victory is certain! One night in particular stood out in the man's memory even now, after the lapse of years. He was a barrister, just called to the Bar then; briefless, it is true, but what did that matter? He had his fortune in his inkpot; moreover, his father was a rich man, there was no need for any profession to be followed. As well, doubtless, since an immediate and sufficient income is not

the inevitable accompaniment of first literary success. He sat that night and watched the lights of the city come twinkling out one after another in the greyness below, and listened to the hum of the life down there, exalted with the thought of first success, feeling the great heart beat in unison with his own—the heart of humanity, which he would touch, would understand and reveal. The curious joining up with all who work, who love and suffer and live, which is the heritage of imagination, was his that night. So he sat long and dreamed of what should be said and told; of books and plans, and the dear silent people born in his brain, living in his mind, just the best company in the world. Even now, all these years after, when the books and plans were all dead and done with, and the man who had had them was on in life, a quiet undistinguished, plodding man—he still loved the twilight in the city. He looked wistfully forth sometimes to see the lights come twinkling out, and still he felt, though dumbly, the great heart beating with his own.

But in the far-off time of which I speak John Feversham was young and successful and quite sure of the future. His book was well reviewed and moderately well sold; and the public, the small part that concerns itself with such things, heralded him as a coming novelist. But while this success was quite fresh and a second book only in its earliest infancy, a calamity befell the author. His father died; a serious loss in most cases, but a double loss here. John was an eldest son, and so head of the family; the settlement of affairs naturally devolved largely on him. He was prepared for this, of course; his wish to comfort his widowed mother was as sincere as his mourning for his father, and his intention to devote all necessary time to family matters was as sincere as both, but it was a somewhat bigger affair than he anticipated.

There are some families who, like England, expect every man to do his duty. John's family was of that sort; it was large, numbering nine younger than John, and its notion of duty was large—at least, the notion held by the three elder sisters, one married and two single. The mother had less marked opinions, being mild in all things, except lamentations, where she rivalled the prophet Jeremiah. Poor soul, she wept herself sick over her husband's death, his goodness to her, his consideration for her comfort, his efforts to spare her every anxiety. All of which was very true, for she had been kept like a hothouse plant. She confided her grief to everyone, though not very explicitly, for her grief

for her present loss often became mixed with grief for a son now twenty years dead.

'He was the image of his father,' so she said; 'not the least like John. I never could think who John was like; but Archie, there was no doubt about Archie. If he had lived, poor dear, I should not feel it half so much; I could almost have persuaded myself his father was still alive. At least, at times, in the dusk—the resemblance was always stronger in the dusk; I used to notice it so when we were sitting by the fire waiting for the lamps to be brought. Ah, happy, happy times! I have always loved the dusk.'

Here she broke down to cry quietly till her eldest daughter soothed her to silence.

'There, mamma, you feel better now, don't you? We won't sit in this dismal light any longer; I ought to have thought the twilight would recall old memories and be too much for you.'

'It is not too much for me; I prefer it—very much prefer it: I cannot see your dreadful funereal black. I cannot bear black. Your poor papa, too, did not like it; he said it did not become me. I never had an entirely black silk dress in my life; why, even my new one is a shade of purple, a lovely heliotrope. Think of it hanging up in the wardrobe! It will never be any use now, and such an expensive silk!'

'It will come in nicely to trim dresses for the younger ones when we are in half-mourning.'

'My dear! Do you think I would allow your sisters to wear dresses made from one of mine? What would your papa have said? He hated anything of that sort; he was the most generous man alive.' But at this recollection a fresh burst of grief checked the poor lady's utterance.

John stood by silent and perplexed; he did not understand this voluble grief, and had no consolations to offer. Latterly he had not lived much at home, and even when there had dwelt principally in a happy atmosphere of his own; so he knew wonderfully little of his family, and found many details of their ways and characteristics puzzling. He stood now silent and at a loss while his sisters consoled their mother as best they could. He felt he had so little share or understanding of the scene that he was glad when someone summoned him to the library.

In the library the family solicitor was waiting to see him: an old man, somewhat gruff in his ways, the only person who knew

anything about the late Mr. Feversham's affairs, and he had only just come by full knowledge with some difficulty. His face was very grave now and his manner additionally gruff, because the painfully acquired knowledge was painful and likely to give pain.

'Do you know anything of your father's fortune, his assets, affairs?' He asked John this rather abruptly, though he knew the answer.

John said that he did not; all that he or any of the family knew was that there had always been plenty of money.

'And necessarily there always will be? Is that the idea?' the solicitor inquired.

John had not really thought much about it.

'Haven't you?' the solicitor said. 'Well, you'll have to think now, I'm afraid. You won't find it very pleasant thinking, either.'

'You mean he was not as rich as we thought?' John asked.

The solicitor nodded. 'He was not rich at all,' he said; 'that is, he did not die rich. A great deal of his income died with him; he never saved, as you know, and there are mortgages and claims. But we'll go into the details later; the thing I want to bring to your attention now is that there is very little left—very little. Not much more a year for you all, widow and children too, than the allowance your father used to make you—a good allowance for a young man, but for a widow and children—well, well, well!'

John sat very quiet during this news—too quiet to please the gruff old lawyer, who was himself sore because he was giving pain.

'You expected this?' he asked rather curtly.

'No,' John answered.

The old man looked him over sharply, but could not discover what he thought or felt, or if he thought or felt at all.

'You had better break it to your mother,' he said, rising and walking to the window; 'it will fall heavy on her, a delicate woman who has never known a care. It's hard on you all, very hard, but hardest on her.'

'Yes,' John said simply, and, concluding it was expected of him, went to his mother. It might have been better, perhaps, if he had told one of the sisters first and left her to pass the news on; but it seemed he was to do it, so he went to Mrs. Feversham direct and told her in the only way he knew, simply and straightforwardly. Afterwards he offered her what sympathy he could and used the few tender phrases that came awkwardly enough to

him—on paper they would have been easy, in words so hard ! Not that it mattered much what he said, no one heard it : Mrs. Feversham's grief overwhelmed everything, and she sobbed in a very abandonment of woe over all her troubles, past, present, and future, joined in one.

The two unmarried daughters, Clara and Sybil, hearing sounds of distress, came hurrying in to learn the cause. Clara, on grasping the situation, joined her mother in a fellowship of tears ; but Sybil set to finding some means to staunch the immediate grief. The means were trivial : a suggestion as to selling a disliked horse, the use to be made of the drawing-room carpet, the advantage of an excuse for giving the cook notice—but in time they were partially effectual. And John, wondering greatly, admired her.

'What a good girl you are, Sybil !' he said, when Mrs. Feversham and Clara, somewhat soothed, had been induced to 'go and lie down,' apparently an infallible feminine panacea.

'One must do something when mamma goes on like that,' Sybil said, arranging the sofa, disturbed by her mother in her excitement. 'You should be more careful how you tell her things.'

'I know I'm a perfect idiot,' John said humbly ; 'but I didn't know how else to do it—a fact is a fact, you see.'

Sybil nodded. 'It is a fact, I suppose ?' she asked.

John was only too much afraid there was no room for doubt. 'I'm awfully sorry,' he said sympathetically. 'It'll make a difference to your being married, I suppose ? Dear old girl, I wish I could do something'—

'Thank you,' Sybil answered in her quiet judicial way ; 'but I don't believe it will make very much difference. I think Henry cares for me, not for what I was likely to have ; and if he gets that appointment at the Cape, we could marry when the year's mourning is up, or soon after. In the meantime'—she looked round the room—'we can't afford to go on living here ; nearly everything will have to be sold. Oh, dear ! What scenes we shall have with mamma !'

John, after what he had seen, could believe it, and he felt glad to think there was a Sybil to deal with them. A calm and judicious young person she was, prepared to plan for the whole family and settle John's future with no more than a cool comment on his part.

'I wonder if Uncle John would take you into his business ?' she said. 'If he would, that would be splendid ; but I'm afraid

it is doubtful, you have never had any commercial training. Still, if he wouldn't do that he might be able to help you to get something in the City. Of course law is out of the question, and you have never done anything else.'

Sybil did not recognise that poor novel as 'anything,' though she had written him a nice letter when it was published. It was not anything that could be introduced into the present count, of course, only he would have liked it mentioned. Uncle John, too, whose favour was to be sought, was his pet objection among relations and men. With praiseworthy fortitude, however, he refrained from mentioning that now, and agreed to consult the worthy if unpleasant person at an early date.

It was thus that John Feversham quitted the quaint chambers in the oldest part of the City and the nominal pursuit of law which he exercised there, and went to live with his family in a suburban neighbourhood. The change of fortune which had befallen pressed on them all, including the married daughter, whose husband was by no means wealthy. She, however, said little about it, she and Sybil and John not being given to saying much, perhaps because Mrs. Feversham and the ornamental and entirely useless Clara said such a very great deal. Younger than Clara came Katie, not yet seventeen, but able to arrange her own affairs. She decided she would qualify for a teacher, and, since studies in Paris and Dresden were out of the question, she would finish her education near at hand and as cheaply as might be; feeling herself bound, so she told John, to pay the family back what it might cost as soon as she earned anything. Below Katie there were five boys, the youngest two twins—Francis and Hugh. It was Francis who became the Great Feversham. These five were placed at cheap day-schools in the near neighbourhood of the new home, and their elders had quite as much of their society as they wished.

As for John, he approached Uncle John, who was a better man than his nephew gave him credit for, and with good result. Uncle John not only took him into his own office, but gave him more than he was worth so as to help the family. Privately he did not expect the young man to be worth much, but in that he was agreeably surprised: the young John proved quiet and industrious, neither giving himself airs nor other people trouble; for a half-fledged author, the old John thought him wonderfully satisfactory. And so it came about that every morning found John bound Londonwards and every evening saw him return.

And his coat grew shabbier and his face lost something of the subdued fire which gave it individuality ; and day by day, month by month, there died within him that glorious zest of life, the pure joy of being, thinking, living. He was growing cabbages, and it was dreary work ; but he was growing the ash tree too.

He was finishing his second novel, in the early mornings and late at night, on Saturday afternoons and Sundays. But it was hard work, no place free from noise and disturbance, no time when he could be sure of quiet and freedom from interruption. In his best hour he was always liable to be called to settle a fight between the little boys, and in his clearest time he always seemed wanted to mend something in the dilapidated old house : Mrs. Feversham had declined to live in a modern house with modern conveniences because 'they were all so suburban.' But apart from these real and tangible interruptions there were other things which disturbed John's mind and thoughts, fitting qualms of conscience and a feeling of duty left undone. It would occur to him now and then that perhaps his mother wanted him ; he was at home very seldom—she might wish for his society. But, so he told himself, he did not know what to say when he was with her. Or perhaps the boys wanted help with their lessons. But Katie was there, and she knew more than he did. Perhaps Sybil desired companionship. But, then, she had Clara. So he would answer himself, striving to shut his eyes ; and because he did not all succeed and because he had a sensitively balanced conscience and mind he wrote with unhappiness and trouble and with but poor success. Thus things went through the autumn and winter, till at last the novel was finished and packed off to the publishers.

John built castles in the air ; he would make up a little for his past disagreeableness when the money came. But, alas ! it never came. The novel was declined with thanks by the firm who had published the first one. By another firm too, and by another and another. No one who was anyone would have the book, and John at last, bitterly against his will, accepted the judgment of the many and acknowledged to himself that it was a failure. Doggedly he set his lips and started to write it all over again, and grey weariness and disappointment sat at his elbow. But neither weariness nor disappointment would have turned him from his purpose, nor yet failure or defeat. Some men do not so much write that the world may read ; rather because it is in them, their chiefest happiness, and because 'the spirit giveth them utterance.'

So John. But one day when he was writing he heard something which did what failure could not do.

It was a Saturday afternoon in April. He was at the time in his bedroom, which for pacific reasons, connected with the one occupied by the twins and the boy next older. The door between the rooms stood ajar, but the table where he usually wrote stood behind it, and Sybil and Katie, who came into the boys' room with some clothes, did not know he was home yet.

'You see, Katie,' Sybil was saying as they entered, 'it would be wrong to miss such a chance. The year's mourning is not up, it is true, but papa would not have wished me to consider that. Henry wants me to marry him and go out right away, and I shall do it; it would be wrong not.'

Katie agreed, but without enthusiasm. 'It will be splendid for you,' she said, 'but beastly here when you have gone.'

'It will be just the same as it is now,' Sibyl told her; but Katie did not agree.

'You know perfectly well it won't,' she said. 'I tell you what—Do let those clothes alone and listen to me. I tell you what I shall do—I shall marry the Professor.'

'Don't talk such nonsense!' Sybil's remark was accompanied by the sound of shaking garments.

'It is not nonsense,' came the answer. 'I'm seventeen, and the Professor is not more than fifty, and awfully clever and rather well off—there is no need for him to lecture on geology at girls' schools, only he likes teaching. He would give up lecturing if he married me, and teach one girl in particular instead of a lot in general.'

'But, Katie, is he fond of you?'

There was a sound of someone drumming on the window; then Katie's voice, rather low, from that part of the room. 'I don't know; perhaps I ought not to have said I would marry him like that. Of course he may not care for me.'

'You know whether he does or not—you must know.' Sybil sounded as businesslike as ever, till, with a sudden alteration of manner, she said: 'Why, Katie, I believe you care for him!'

'I could if I let myself,' came from the window, accompanied by more drumming, 'and I shall when you marry.'

'But who will look after things here?'

'They will look after themselves. I don't see that the family has much claim on me; besides, there is Clara.'

'Clara is no use, you know that. The boys will simply run wild ; no one will check them if you go.'

'They do that already, pretty well ; you have little authority, I have less, and John knows and cares nothing about them.'

'Oh, John ! You can't count on him.'

Up to that point the writer had only been conscious of the conversation to wish, as he often had occasion to before, that the conversers would be quick and go. But at the mention of his own name he suddenly knew what they were talking about.

'He ought to count,' Katie was saying ; 'he ought to care. If he did his duty he would be a real head of the house, not a dreamer shut up with his own fancies.'

'My dear, he works all day for the family ; writing is his hobby. He may just as well do that as play football or cricket or anything else. You don't understand men, Katie ; they are not like women, they must have some relaxation, and John's has at least the merit of cheapness.'

'Oh, stuff !' Katie said impatiently. 'I suppose he will think it our fault if the boys go to the devil. Oh, it is strong language, I dare say, but none too strong ! Who is going to manage them ? I can't control them ; Clara only nags ; and John, who might do something, shuts himself up when he is at home, or if he ever does come out he is so preoccupied and disagreeable he had better have stayed where he was.'

Katie went out of the room as she delivered this judgment, and Sybil, after shutting a drawer and setting a chair straight, followed, leaving John to silence and such thoughts as made silence useless. He sat, the ink dry on his pen, the last word unfinished on his paper, staring straight before him and seeing there a vision of himself as others saw him. It hurt, hurt terribly ; and Sybil's calm relegation of his writing to the sphere of recreations, pastimes, and hobbies not less than Katie's more sweeping condemnation of himself. At first surprise and pain were stronger than anything else, then anger and injury and a feeling of misjudgment. But soon the well-developed conscience began to assert itself, the old plaguing questions and doubts came back. What if the sisters were right after all ? Were they right ? He put the dry pen down and deliberately examined things ; he recalled a hundred trivial trying incidents, his daily life in its daily detail ; and everywhere and on every hand the hard judgment began to show just. He rose and began to pace the room ; every-

thing was wrong, he was wrong, life was absolutely and hopelessly wrong. But could he set it right? Could anyone? He walked and walked, struggling with the hopeless tangle; then all at once, with an unconscious gesture as if he pushed it from him, he sat down again. He could do nothing immediately, there was nothing to be done at present; he must observe first, set a watch on himself and the others, and make quite, quite sure that a remedy was needed, and that, as Katie said, the remedy was really within his power.

Acting on this determination, in the days that followed he made careful observations of himself and the others, and so came to learn one or two things. The first was that he was completely outside the real life of the family; no one told him anything, no one asked him anything. No one expected him to sympathise with joys or troubles or share work or play. The second was that he was irritable if interrupted at work: if disturbed by a pillow fight in the next room when writing in the early morning, inclined to vent his feelings with unnecessary severity on the offenders; if called out to settle a dispute, more ready to stop it peremptorily than inquire into justice or the claim of either party. And the third discovery was that the five young brothers were badly behaved, badly trained, badly brought up, unchecked by their mother and beyond their sisters' control, going from bad to worse. There were other things he discovered, but they all tended the same way. Clearly he stood convicted; clearly it was set before him that a remedy was indeed needed. It did not lie within the sisters' powers, or within anyone else's; it might or might not lie within his, but duty shouted aloud that he should at least try.

Ay, but it was hard! There was but one thing for him to do—let the writing go. He could not work and write and keep his temper and his sympathies too; he could not attend to his business and his unreal world and his brothers' morals; he could not do his duty to his family and indulge his craving for ink as well. He could not, in fact, have the cabbage garden under the ash tree. And if it went it must be altogether, root and branch, every bit. Merely to leave off writing would not be enough for one who had it in the blood as he had; he must leave off thinking about it, dreaming of it, hoping for it. He must set some other aim before himself, have some other standard and ideal; he must deliberately block out any future dream concerning it, and even

cut off the past, destroying, for fear of his own weakness, anything that spoke of it, that told what had been and so whispered what might be.

He was no hero, and it was not at once that he came to this: it took a little time even genuinely to realise the need; but, being a simply honest sort of person, he reached that point comparatively soon. But the next was not easy; it was not easy to follow out the only possible course—it was bitterly, bitterly hard, for he loved the dream-people to whom he was called upon to say good-bye as he loved few real people; and the work, in spite of failure and weariness, was the one joy of a somewhat barren life. So he struggled and struggled, but in the end duty won; and, rightly or wrongly, necessarily or unnecessarily—and there may be some who say he could have done his duty without this trouble—he gave himself the command that the ash tree must come down.

The decision made, there was a sacrifice by fire. He chose an evening when the house was comparatively quiet and most of the family out. The one servant was out too, and the large kitchen—the best room in the old house—was empty. Down to the kitchen he carried his papers, his manuscripts, the Press notices of his first book, his own copy of it, even his blank paper, and there on the hearth he burned them. Close he stood, feeding the flames, stirring them when they sunk down, watching them flicker and blaze. Brightly they leapt, as hopes had leapt once; warmly glowing as fancy glowed then, building in their red hearts ephemeral faces, cities, palaces, as the words that were vanishing had built them once for the reader and the writer, the weaver of tales who would weave no more. And the fire shone ruddy on the red brick floor and the eight-day clock ticked solemn and loud, and the crickets cheeped cheerily under the old hearthstones, and the vanishing words, the vanishing life, mattered to no one at all. The flames died down, for the last time they sank, the red ashes grew black, crumbled, fell. He stirred them for the last time; they did not glow again, there was no scrap of either red or white left, all was black; all was dust now, all dead. For a moment he stood looking, then he turned abruptly away, and, stumbling to a chair, stretched his arms upon the table and hid his face in them.

There was a black cat sitting before the fire; for a little it sat looking wisely at the charred papers; then it rose and, stretching, jumped on the table. Softly it rubbed itself against the extended arms, insinuatingly forced its nose under the bowed head. Doubt-

less it understood nothing, yet to utter loneliness the soft movement felt like sympathy. John moved a caressing hand, then raised his head. For a little he and the creature communed in silence, looking into each other's eyes, safe from incautious comment or too curious kind inquiry, seeing little but the afterglow of sunset. There were two old fruit trees at the back, all that was left of the beautiful garden that once surrounded the house. They stood clear, the villas behind sloped away so that the upper branches were outlined against the sky. They were in blossom now, delicate colours sharp against the sky, where the pure pale after-light still lingered. Some blackbird that mistook the two trees for country was singing a last good-night. John heard it, and, looking round, saw the trees and the rosy twilight, and for a moment his eyes grew dim. At least this was left him. It still was a world of sunsets, even in the city; of fruit blooms, of autumn glows, even in crowded streets; and sweet wild promises of springtime for old men and for young. This still was left, and not himself or another could take it from him. Thank God for that!

The sacrifice was made, but that was the beginning rather than the end of the difficulty. John found his next steps almost as hard as his last, for, though they were smaller matters, they depended on other people. To begin with, the family, not knowing about the sacrifice, mistook his intentions and rather resented his efforts; there were some of them who undoubtedly would rather have him out of the way writing. Then, too, he was shy and awkward; he found it difficult to make overtures, and more difficult still to re-make them when he was rebuffed. It cannot be said that he received much encouragement. Sybil was busy getting her trousseau; she probably never even realised that he was any different or trying to do any differently; for so soon as the trousseau was ready she was married, and sailed for the Cape, amidst the lamentations of her mother. Katie, too, was busy at that time studying geology, perhaps with a view to the Professor, for before long her engagement to him was announced, also amidst the lamentations of her mother, who thought she might have done better. She was married in the following autumn, and went to New Zealand for a protracted and geological honeymoon. Clara, it is true, seemed at first inclined to appreciate John's overtures; but finding they did not bring her much in the way of gaiety, she soon grew tired of him and snubbed him back to his original position.

With Mrs. Feversham John was not much more successful, partly because they mutually misunderstood one another and partly because he so often overlooked small things, and at first at all events could not realise that they made the sum total of the important in life to her.

There remained, however, the five boys, and John comforted himself, whatever else befell, he could do his duty to them. They did not want him any more than the others, and he knew even less how to approach them or how to begin his self-appointed task; in despair he just seized on the first definite thing that occurred to him and did that. He took them to church; they did not want to go, but he had a vague idea it might do them good. And if it did nothing else it insured that for an hour and a half each week they were quiet and considered things and conformed to someone's notion of decent behaviour. After the first few weeks he began to notice their outside appearance, and took it upon himself to see they were clean and tidy when they did go to church; which also they did not care about. He spent his evenings superintending their lessons—Katie was too busy now to do it; he recalled his forgotten Latin, and on his journeys to and from town relearnt Euclid so as to help those who had stuck in the first book. He began to give attention to their grievances too: studied the matters under dispute and quelled the riots which occasionally occurred, after interrogation and with a strict attention to justice. Later he did his best to moderate their language and otherwise superintend their moral welfare, even to the extent of calling in the old-fashioned remedy of the birch, which, to their credit it must be said, they thought quite fair and accepted in a sportsmanlike spirit when they could not honestly evade it in the same. By November, when Katie was married, he had begun to have a certain amount of control; even he, disheartened by many disappointments, could see that. But it seemed to him he was nothing but a necessary evil to his brothers; at first he found it very hard to be anything else, for he found it very difficult to enter into their playtime. But by slow degrees he managed even that; his life was so desperately empty he craved for something to fill it, and his interest in them, their schoolfellows, and any trifle they would tell him was so genuine as, after a time, to attract confidence. Besides, he soon found there were definite things he could do even here: on rare half-holidays he could take them to the pit at a pantomime or a circus. Oh! the excitement of

getting in, the difficulty of not losing one of the five in doing it! He could remember their birthdays too, and make a festival of Christmas. He did make a festival of that first Christmas after the ash tree came down—a wonderful, cheap Christmas, with little money and much thought, Clara and her mother away, and riotous games in the shabby old house.

And so he went, feeling his way, seeking duty, only duty, till by degrees he began to lose all aptitude for anything else; till, lo! it became pleasure to him, the one thing in his life. Gradually he came to live for that only, for the boys, their work, their play, their ambition and success. Month in, month out, year in, year out, nothing else much troubled him, nothing else at all gave him pleasure. When he discovered Francis' real aptitude for literature he was a happy man, perhaps almost as happy as when he had discovered his own; he felt that fate had been kinder to him than he deserved. Inly he determined that Francis should have all the training possible to get, all the encouragement possible to give; in him, if it could be, the dream-people should live and not die. Thus things went, not for months but for years.

There were fifteen years of bondage; then came release. Of course the bonds had slackened a little before then, as far as immediate money pressure was concerned. Uncle John's estimate of his nephew had gradually risen, and with justice; and the nephew's salary had risen too; but improved income had only meant greater advantages for the boys. Now, however, at the end of fifteen years, old John died, leaving young John (he was forty) sole possessor of the business and much stored wealth besides. The yoke was off at last.

At last! He sat alone in the little bedroom which had seen so many struggles first to write, and afterwards far more terrible struggles not to write. The ink-love had died hard, how hard no one knew; over and over again in the years which were gone the stump of the ash tree had sprouted and put forth twigs seeking life; and over and over again he had cut them away. But by degrees they had grown less frequent and weaker, and at last ceased altogether. The little bare room had seen all this and much besides. He looked round him now and tried to realise what had been and what freedom meant. He stretched his limbs as a man who puts down a burden; and, stretching, he looked at them almost unconsciously, and somehow became aware that his boots were neat and worn, that his coat-sleeves were neat and

worn, that there was about him somehow an all-pervading air at once neat and worn. It filled him with a curious feeling of pain, and somehow surprise. He rose and looked in the small glass that stood upon his dressing-table. The face that looked back at him was a grave, kindly face, lined and marked a little, and with hair about the temples thinning and turning grey. There was nothing at all striking in the face, nothing to make it unlike hundreds of other faces that one can see any day, nothing that suggested that this man was not as other men. Perhaps a certain air of patient resignation, but certainly no touch of the divine fire—it was neat and worn too. John had got used to that face and the change that had come so gradually; it ought not to have startled him as it did. He ought to have forgotten the face of fifteen years ago, restless, hopeful, young. He had forgotten till now, but now he remembered, and somehow almost expected to see it back. There were other things he expected back too—was sure would come in the new leisure which was dawning: the old nature, the old tastes, the old powers, the dream-people whom he had slain.

But, alas! they did not come; the leisure was there, but not the power to use it. His back had so long been bent to the burden that he could not quite straighten it now. His ash tree, his beautiful tree with its all-shading branches and greedy roots, had been cut down; it had been lopped and chopped, burnt with fire, dug out, destroyed, there was but a half-charred stump left, a landmark few but he could see, without life or hope of budding. It was dead past all recall. He did not believe it, he expected life to come back with leisure, he sought to recall it; and when it did not come he sought again and again—no one knew how he sought. He would not accept defeat any more than he accepted defeat in his earlier struggles. But this was another matter and one beyond his control. 'I must give it time,' he said; 'it will come in time. I have forgotten, but I can relearn.'

But it did not come, it never came again; at last he knew it, for he could not deceive himself. The love of the craftsman was still his, even though the skill was gone; he could not mistake the counterfeit for the real, and the real was gone from him. And when he knew this for the first and last time, he strove no more, but quietly put the whole from him and laid away the little old inkpot which had come out again, as a mother lays by her dead baby's shoes.

For the family, of course, the fortune was a considerable blessing. The married sisters felt the advantage—they were all married now, Clara too; she had bestowed herself rather late on a poor curate, who was the poorer for the bestowal. The boys benefited much; they were men now, even Francis and Hugh were almost men, but the money helped them all a little. They were mostly out in the world, some abroad, some with homes of their own; Francis, however, was still at home, and for him and in him John rejoiced. For him at least the fortune had not come too late—Francis should travel, Francis should work only at the congenial work of literature, Francis should have what he himself had dreamed of, Francis should be great.

And Francis had it all and did it all, and more than fulfilled the hopes and ambitions. And—some people find this surprising—really remained much attached to John even though he did not understand the legend of the cabbage garden. He did not, of course, always continue to live at home with John; it would have been inconvenient all round, he said—and John acquiesced. So when he began to be famous and independent he had chambers in town; not quite the part where John had them long ago, further west. And John and his mother lived together some way out of town. They had a beautiful garden and many pear trees, which pleased John, and a brougham, which pleased his mother; and usually one or other of the daughters or their children to stay with them, for Mrs. Feversham still found John poor company. And John was content. Only perhaps sometimes—not very often, just now and then—he found himself thinking rather hungrily of the old days of cramped means and circus pits, of Euclid and face-washing and church-going and young brothers in whom he lived. But quickly he would call himself to order and remember the other children, the nieces and nephews who were all so absurdly, astonishingly, and unreasonably fond of Uncle John—Uncle John who was never too tired or too busy for children's sorrows and joys, never too wise or too hard for youth's wrongs, hopes, and distresses—Uncle John whom Divine Wisdom saved from the dream-people to bestow thus upon the real.

The cabbage-grower had said he failed when he tried to grow roses in his parable garden—the roses of loves and joys beside the humble cabbages of duty—and perhaps he did. Yet the roses seem to have come there; thickly they came, flourishing and

blooming of their own accord in these later days, blooming everywhere about the path, a success even as the cabbages. And they were a magnificent success, especially the Great Feversham.

But who really was the Great Feversham some may question, for there is a certain old saying which runs 'Greater is he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.'

UNA L. SILBERRAD.

THE BOOK ON THE TABLE.¹

'DOROTHEA BEALE.'¹

DOROTHEA BEALE was born in the year 1831; and perhaps no time could have been more appropriate for one whose life was to be spent in educational reform. Whatever the cause, indisputably the training of Early Victorian women had degenerated into a system whose aim was a mere show of ornamental achievement, whilst its discipline imposed crushing restraints, as if ornamental beings were recognised to be necessities of a highly dangerous character. Napoleon, we know, reserved religion for special use in girls' schools, where it was to be maintained 'in full severity'; and when amongst his reasons he instanced the unsteadiness of women's ideas, their need of constant resignation and of a kind of indulgent and easy charity, it is likely that he expressed the views of a later day than his own. Dorothea Beale was not the first in her family to rebel against accepted traditions. In the preceding generation her cousin, Miss Caroline Cornwallis, dreamt already of 'raising her sex, and with it the world,' and her writings, audacious and for the best of reasons anonymous, had made some stir and received the compliment of being taken for the work of a man. Something of Miss Cornwallis's combative spirit belonged also to Dorothea Beale, in addition to her own more solid qualities of judgment, patience, and devotion to duty. The story of her childhood forecasts with singular accuracy the mature woman. It is on record that she once dressed a doll; and that she had holidays we know, for they were spent 'rubbing brasses' in the old city churches, or, later, taking the younger members of the family for walks, 'watch in hand'; but play, in the ordinary sense, neither then nor afterwards did she need or understand the need of in others. At the age of thirteen she had already begun to teach, with herself as her first pupil. Four years later she was amongst those who listened to F. D. Maurice at the opening of Queen's College. In 1849 she became mathematical tutor in the same college; in 1854, head-teacher. Ideas as to the right and wrong ways of conducting girls' schools crystallised early in Miss Beale's

¹ *Dorothea Beale*, by E. Raikes.

mind, and the management of Queen's failing to secure her approval, she somewhat rashly decided that her own theories would find freer scope in the Clergy Daughters' School of Brontë fame, now removed from Cowan Bridge to Casterton. 'Times are unlike Jane Eyre,' she wrote soon after her arrival there; but many barbarisms survived, and the London teacher, filled with missionary zeal and high hopes for 'women and the race,' burned to remove them. The control of the school, however, lay in the hands of six clergymen much respected in the neighbourhood, who had on their part settled views as to the right training of the female intelligence and showed no disposition to welcome missionary enterprise in their own field. Proposals to mitigate the penal discipline of the school were overruled as heretical, after a discussion in which one clerical humorist remarked: 'We do hear of angels being punished, but not of their going up higher.' Other differences arose. Miss Beale's Anglicanism proved profoundly alarming to Calvinistic Yorkshire; the restrained gravity of her manner and the cut of her dark nunlike dress were suspect no less than her unconcealed ardour for reform. 'Be firm but very gentle' was the counsel received from a wise father at this trying juncture; and perhaps his daughter paid most heed to the first part of it. Anyhow, the Casterton experiment ended abruptly, and in the closing days of 1857 she returned to London to digest her failure at leisure.

Her use of the interval which followed was exceedingly characteristic. A certain school-book convicted of some Romish taint had lately been pronounced unfit for young English minds. Dorothea Beale, with her quick practical instinct, perceived the educational gap, and, heartsick and anxious as she was, bent all her remarkable powers of concentration to the task of filling it, accomplishing her work on the bare floor of an attic, unfurnished and fireless, severities which the student welcomed as a convenient check to friendly intrusions. The result of her labours was published in August 1858, and probably Miss Beale's own subordinates were the first to make use of her 'Text-book of History,' for the same month saw her established at Cheltenham.

The Ladies' College had been founded five years before this time by a group of enlightened gentlemen inspired by the notion that it might be possible, without impairing the 'modesty and gentleness of the female character,' to cultivate within reasonable limits the female mind. It was to be tried, in short, whether

angels might not be promoted as well as punished. So far the public had not met the venture with any great show of enthusiasm, and even the arrival of the new lady principal with her reputation for advanced ideas failed at first to revive the precarious fortunes of the school. Possibly her reputation was a doubtful asset, for the moral atmosphere of Cheltenham was no more genial to reform than that of other places. Those were still the days when the word 'college' in connexion with girls was liable to be received with roars of laughter. Rich parents could not understand why their daughters should be educated. Some believed that girls would become like boys if they studied the same subjects. The introduction of Euclid would have been the death of the school. Scientific teaching slipped in unobserved under the name of physical geography. 'This subject,' Miss Beale remarks drily, was considered unobjectionable, 'as few boys learned geography.' Anxious mothers seemed to see the piano, the buttress of their own youth, decaying before their eyes. To appease them Miss Beale provided classes at which four pupils performed simultaneously the same piece on two pianos. Ungrateful for this concession, Cheltenham society took no notice of the new head-mistress, and the leaders of the religious world held aloof from what they regarded as a doubtful departure. Miss Beale, fortunately, was one of those who find opposition 'an excellent tonic.' She was young; her quiet ways concealed unlimited vigour and resolution; her appearance, slender, pale, smooth-browed, was charming, as a faded photograph of the time still testifies; and her manner and disposition, the School Council was pleased to declare, were such as to render it 'pleasant to maintain frequent personal communication with her.' Dorothea Beale wasted nothing, least of all experience, and memories of Casterton, painful as they were, proved of good service to her in her dealings with her large and not always manageable board. She was complimented upon her 'wisdom in accepting adverse resolutions with equanimity,' and naturally lost nothing by such wisdom, business, no doubt, getting itself accomplished more and more smoothly under a lady principal who accepted verbal defeat with calmness, her Council in return sooner or later carrying out her desires. At all events, after the first desperate struggle for existence the school made rapid headway on the lines of advance laid down by herself, growing continually beyond its bounds, until it took final shape in the stately Gothic building, with its halls, classrooms, and laboratories, its boarding-houses, training

college, auxiliary day school, sanatorium, kindergarten, and even—not altogether to the liking of Miss Beale, whose independent spirit scorned free education—its affiliated elementary school. New teachers in their leisure moments watched with fascination Miss Beale's masterly sway of her small kingdom. She possessed the qualification, not always found in good workers, of getting good work from others. To the educational purpose of which the college building formed, as it were, but a crude outward symbol she devoted every faculty of body, mind and soul, and of her staff she demanded no less. That some were unable to rise to the standard set before them is less surprising than the large response she obtained to her exalted ideal. Complaints were heard in some quarters that the school was Church-like. Dorothea Beale gloried in the reproach. In her view all knowledge was sacred, and she liked to think of the college as a spiritual building, a little community held by invisible bonds, the mystic in her looking beyond the practical ends of education to inspired ideals for 'women and the race.' It was the secret desire of her heart that from her work might one day rise a chosen body of women who should go forth in the world as a teaching order; and as in imagination she contemplated the labours of this intellectual sisterhood, who knows what visions of human progress—or, in her own language, of 'soul evolution'—filled her thoughts? Obviously the atmosphere of a school under such a lady principal—one had almost said under such a lady abbess—would be bracing, too bracing perhaps for some constitutions. Ten minutes' meditation on rising, 'just to plume one's feathers for a few short flights from the earth,' was the modest spiritual exercise privately recommended by Miss Beale; but as you follow the college routine you seem to be watching a succession of short flights from the earth. There were, for instance, literature classes, whose chief purpose was to convey high teaching on life and conduct. "Blessed are the pure in heart—poor Swift!"—that, said Miss Beale, recalling a dictum of her father's, 'was the best literature lesson I ever received'; and her own lessons were given in the same spirit. Shakespeare's plays proved useful, for 'knowledge of character is so important to women.' Dryden, Pope, and other distinguished exponents of inferior thought suffered, it is to be feared, considerable neglect; but no young lady left Cheltenham without a close acquaintance with the ethics of Browning. History, of course, abounded in moral illustrations, which were not impressed upon the pupils only, the college teachers on one occasion receiving a summons to hear

the 'truth' about Cranmer, time-serving, and cowardice. Then there were college plays, for which Miss Beale, who held that recreation should be purposeful too, demanded always something 'really high'—'Griselda,' 'Britomart,' or Tennyson's 'Princess.' There was a college magazine also, through which it was hoped members might 'enrich each other' by interchange of thought. Unfortunately, no samples of the writing produced under such an impulse are given; but light breaks in cheerfully with a batch of letters on the subject from Ruskin, whose ruthless criticisms are tempered by affectionate respect and admiration for the magazine's editor. Clearly a high-minded, highly educated lady, leading the public schools and the universities in the teaching of Euclid; instructing herself and others in languages and literatures, in science and philosophies, old and new; learning shorthand in her old age 'as a diversion'; earning recognition from learned societies at home and abroad, gold medals from Paris, honours from America, from Durham University, from the University of London, an honorary LL.D. from the University of Edinburgh, and with it all ready, you conceive, at any moment to cast away all she knew and all she had gained for the salvage of one 'moral truth.' 'Très Anglaise,' writes a French student, 'les Anglais l'avaient bien comprise.'

Miss Beale's influence was of a singularly impersonal character. As a natural consequence of her indifference to things merely social she saw comparatively little of her teachers; some she hardly knew at all. Her shyness, again, stood as a partial barrier between herself and her students. It is likely also that, as a representative in a special sense of her own sex, so often accused of being too personal, she would be scrupulous to eliminate as far as might be the personal element from her work. But, still more, something in the very essence of her own nature forbade her to exercise powers not strictly to be justified by reason. Though she possessed in a high degree the mysterious quality called influence, she had, we are told, a peculiar dread of the word itself and all it stands for, and there is evidence, almost pathetic, of the pains she took to strip herself of her natural advantages. It is easy enough to capture the admiration of impulsive girls on the look-out for some object on which to expend superfluous feeling. Unauthorised excursions in this line received no encouragement from Miss Beale, and when we read in her diary the confession, 'yearned to be loved,' there is something touching in her consistent refusal to compete with those who had an earlier claim on the affections of her students. Other

reasons besides loyalty or shyness kept her from forming close ties with her college 'children.' Women, according to George Eliot, are in danger of living too exclusively by the affections. Miss Beale seems to have been deeply impressed by the danger. 'Our friendship,' she writes of a loved fellow-teacher, 'never degenerated into any foolish or selfish attachment'; and she will often warn her friends against similar follies and selfishness. Naturally, one so jealous to preserve a fine personal liberty in the ordinary relationships of life will be no less fastidious in higher regions, and the paradox that, whilst she held her own faith with clear and passionate conviction, she was often claimed as an ally by those from whom she differed, is one of which it is easy to see the explanation.

The practical results of the campaign in which Miss Beale played so distinguished a part are matters of course to-day, though differences of opinion may still exist as to the precise value to be set upon them. Possibly in remote places some may still be found to regret the opening of new horizons and new careers to women, and their invasion of the universities and the professions; or may deny that it was really necessary to destroy 'misplaced female reverence for the learning of a pass-man.' And these things were of but secondary importance to Miss Beale herself, whose ultimate goal was always character and moral development. The gain in this direction must remain a matter of conjecture and dispute. Miss Beale's friend and fellow-pioneer, Miss Buss, in moments of depression would complain that the girls of the last decade of her work were less easy to influence than those of the first. And Miss Beale, in her last public utterance, suggested the melancholy reflection that, after all that had been done to cultivate the feminine understanding, many women remained 'not serious, not devoted.' It would have been interesting to learn more from one who had witnessed changes 'inconceivably great' and was well qualified to estimate their effect; but here, as elsewhere in this biography, curiosity is met by an impenetrable wall of reserve. Our final view is of a rather lonely sovereign, gradually hemmed in by the solid evidences of her triumph, until her own house loses sight altogether of the outer world and knows no other light and air than it derives from the corridors of the surrounding college. And Miss Beale, we are hardly surprised to hear, 'preferred that it should be so.'

ELEANOR CECIL.

THE PROGRESS OF EDUCATION IN CHINA.

It is just ten years ago since the world was startled by the sudden appearance of a series of edicts issued by the Emperor in his own name, directing the most radical, if not revolutionary, reforms. Amongst other changes, the whole system of education throughout the Empire was to be reconstructed, Western learning was to take the place of the Classics in the public examinations, and the national temples were to be converted into schools of the new learning. The whole literary world was thrown into a tumult of amazement and dismay. Men who for years had been spending their strength in mastering the intricacies of the 'eight-legged essay,' and loading their memories with the curious dissertations of innumerable commentators, saw all their labours thrown away, and the impossible task of acquiring a smattering of strange and unintelligible sciences thrust upon them. Everywhere there was a general rush to the missionary, the only man in most of the provinces who knew where books of Western science could be procured, or how they should be read. But the panic was only for a moment. The Empress Dowager returned suddenly to Peking; the 'Six Martyrs,' as they were called, perished miserably; Kang yu wei and Liang ch'i ch'ao, leaders of the Reform party, fled, the one to Hong Kong, the other to Japan. The Reform edicts were repealed, and the world concluded that the efforts of the reformers had availed nothing at all.

Within a year there appeared a little book written by Chang Chih Tung, the Viceroy of the two Hu provinces. Chang Chih Tung was a man who held the respect of every scholar in the Empire. At a remarkably early age he had attained the first place in the public examinations, his loyalty was unquestioned, his honesty proverbial. He was universally accepted as the ideal Chinese governor, a scholar and a gentleman devoted to his people's welfare. His book was commended by the Emperor in a special rescript, in which he directed that it should be sent to the viceroys, governors and literary examiners of the Empire, with orders to publish it widely in every province. It was received everywhere with an interest and attention such as has been given to no book published in China within the memory of man.

In that book Chang Chih Tung exposed, with unsparing severity, the evils from which his country was suffering.

The stock of knowledge possessed by the Chinese literati [he says] is obtained from incomplete commentaries and eight-legged essays; the knowledge possessed by officials is derived from precedent. The military know nothing beyond the use of a few blunt instruments and the antique methods of ancient warfare, which suffices for all their needs. The farmer has no means of deriving any appreciable profit from his land, as he can produce nothing new; the merchant cannot engage in distant trade, and the traveller has no means of easy and rapid transit. Among the Chinese there is no incentive to thought or action, no intercourse among the people, and the condition of things has become stagnant and effete. Effeteness has begotten stupidity, and stupidity lethargy; lethargy has produced idleness, and idleness waste. And these are the reasons why the hearts of the Chinese are shot to the core with sensuality and vice.¹

The officials have looked upon the new learning with contemptuous disgust and refused to modify their old ideas, consequently there has been no widespread translation of books and no true enlightenment among the people. 'If we do not change soon, what will become of us? European knowledge will increase more and more, and Chinese stupidity will become more dense. We shall be marked as the sure prey of the West. . . . The foreigners will suck our blood, and, worse than this, pare the flesh from our bones.'²

The only way of safety, he declared, lay in a revival of learning. 'Knowledge alone can save us from destruction.' Whilst he denounced the revolutionary party, who talked lightly of establishing a republic, as 'stupid and ignorant whipper-snappers with a mere superficiality of wisdom,' who seem desirous of abolishing altogether our religion and our administration, and substituting in their place the immature governments and brusque manners of the foreigners; whilst he declared that 'good patriots consider such men rebellious and intelligent men regard them as fools'; whilst he proclaimed them as 'scoffers' whom he 'could not count as human beings,' whilst he mocked at their theories and tore their proposals to shreds, yet he himself was prepared to advise what would seem to most Western statesmen very abrupt and dangerous reforms. 'Abolish the eight-legged essay,' he cries. 'Convert the temples and monasteries of the Buddhists and Taoists into schools.' 'We suggest that seven temples with their land, &c., out of every ten be appropriated to educational purposes.' He seemed to think that teachers and books could be procured in a moment.

¹ Woodbridge's Translation, pp. 74, 75.

Ibid. p. 85.

Any man of understanding can, by the use of the books published in Shanghai, equip himself in three months to teach in the high schools; in a couple of years the colleges will produce men who are qualified to teach; in three years there will be an abundance of useful literature, and consequently better-equipped instructors. There need be no fear on this score.¹

It is extremely difficult to estimate the real meaning of words like these. On the one hand, he wanted to encourage his people by all means to study Western learning, and to remove every stumbling-block which prejudice or weakness might put in their way; on the other he wanted to avoid being confounded with the revolutionary party, a confusion which would have driven every cautious man in China into opposition to every single suggestion that he might make. And most of his suggestions, whilst they were calculated to alarm the Conservatives, were yet extremely well designed. He proposed that his people should obtain a knowledge of Western science and arts by sending students abroad, especially to Japan, by founding schools in the provincial cities, by encouraging the translation of books, by supporting and studying native newspapers and by extending railways. 'The whistle of the train,' he said, 'will wake the echoes and dispel the doubts of the Conservatives.'

But the great merit of Chang Chih Tung's work was that it impressed upon the people the important truth, which is nearly always forgotten by those who seek in new learning the panacea for the ills of a nation. Chang Chih Tung was convinced that the new learning by itself would not be an unmixed blessing. 'Western learning,' he said, 'is practical—Chinese learning is moral.' 'Chinese learning concerns itself with moral conduct, Western learning with the affairs of the world.' He saw clearly the danger of men giving themselves up to the study of 'practical learning' and abandoning 'moral learning.' He contended earnestly that the Western learning was not really opposed to the teachings of Confucius, but he saw that there was a grievous tendency in those who study Western language and literature to belittle the doctrines of Confucius, and to shake themselves free from all those moral precepts upon which the highest Chinese character is built. What he hoped to see was a great revival of Confucian morality. 'If the Chinese heart throbs in unison with the heart of the sages, expressing the truth in irreprovable conduct, in filial piety, brotherly love, honesty, integrity,' then the study of foreign ideas could do no harm. But an education which teaches nothing but the way to control the forces of nature, to attain to wealth and power,

¹ Woodbridge's Translation, pp. 103, 104.

that seemed terrible. He saw that the Western learning cut away the very roots of the religion of China. For Buddhism and Taoism he had no regrets. 'Buddhism and Taoism are decaying, and cannot long exist.' Then use their property and their temples as schools of Western learning! But the danger to Confucianism was a very different matter. In the eyes of Chang Chih Tung the overthrow of Confucianism would mean the overthrow of all moral sanctions. A people without a religion is a people lost. He urges the people to tolerate Christianity. 'The Western religion,' he says, 'is flourishing and making progress every day.' He even goes so far as to argue that it cannot injure the Chinese because Confucianism as it is now practised is inadequate to raise them from their present miserable condition. The real danger is learning without any religion.

In this Chang Chih Tung was certainly right; where he erred was in imagining that there was in Confucian ethics sufficient vital energy to restore a fallen people. He was anxious for a revival of pure Confucianism. He wanted to do away with 'the useless rubbish that has accumulated in course of time,' and to study only what is important. He forgot that the study of a moral code by itself cannot inspire the hearts of men to sacrifice worldly success. Chang Chih Tung himself wrote as if he were maintaining a lost cause. 'Buddhism is dead, Taoism is dead, Confucianism is in peril.' And the danger to Confucianism arose from precisely that study and practice which Chang Chih Tung saw was essential to the salvation of his country.

All this happened not quite ten years ago: what has been the result? Chang Chih Tung advised his people to send young students abroad, especially to Japan. In February 1902 there were 271 men and three girls studying in Japan; last year there were 14,000 men. This year, for reasons which I shall presently explain, there is probably not half that number; but even half that number is sufficient to raise very serious questions. Chang Chih Tung advised the establishment of schools throughout the Empire; last year, in spite of his advanced age, he resigned his vice-royalty in order to undertake the task of establishing a system of universal education. There are now schools of Western learning in nearly all the great cities of the Empire, and the enthusiasm for founding these institutions is not abating. It is certainly true that qualified teachers are only too rare, and that even after nine years, in many places people profess to teach foreign languages on the

strength of a slight acquaintance with one of the 'language without a teacher' books; but, nevertheless, the schools are open, the thirst for knowledge is awakened, whilst in some of the provincial colleges the education in Western science and literature is not to be despised. Nor has this growth of schools affected only the boys. Schools have been opened for the education of the daughters of the gentry, and little girls may be seen going to and fro with their school books, in a country where the seclusion of women was considered one of the fundamental principles of society. When Yuan Shih Kai took his leave of Tientsin in November last year, in his address to the people he strongly urged the importance of these schools for girls, because he said 'women are the roots of a nation. It is useful that in all provinces rich and poor be educated alike.'

The extraordinary change which has been wrought in these few years is illustrated in the simplest and most effective way by a report of events which took place in Kweilin in December 1907. A running track was laid out 800 yards in circumference for 'The Kuangsi Schools' Competitive Sports.'

The gateways were made of bamboo, wreathed with evergreens and decked with flags, and in the centre of the circle was a tall flagstaff flying the yellow dragon, and from it to the outer edge of the circle were many lines dressed with thousands of gaily-coloured flags. . . . All round this half-mile circle were the seats of the fair and the mighty—for not only had the great ones of the city lent their countenance to the doings of the day, but for the first time in history 'Kweilin and his wife' went out together. Row upon row of China's daughters painted one section of the ring with brilliant-hued colours, and blue, red, black, and green silk blended with the dark fur-lined full-dress costumes of the officials, interspersed with the bright blue neat uniforms of the officers and cadets of China's modern army. The girl-students were there as spectators, but took no part in the sports.

About 3000 boys and youths took part in the sports, and the correspondent of the 'North China Herald,' whose account I have been quoting, remarked that the performances were surprisingly good. 'Nothing,' he added, 'so far has served to illustrate the rapid progress of change in our province as these sports, although we are looked upon as the poorest and most backward of all the eighteen.'

Only fourteen years ago Lord Curzon wrote of China as 'a country stupefied with the pride of the past,' 'a monstrous and ugly anachronism, defiantly planted on the fringe of a world to whose contact she is indifferent and whose influence she abhors.' In Ning Po last autumn there was a ladies' club, consisting of eighty

members, presided over by the Taotai's wife. In Canton last year the girl-students held meetings, at which girls were the speakers, to discuss the political situation. In Wuchang a society of young men attached to one of the chapels of the American Episcopal Mission determined to open a night school. Within three days more than a thousand scholars had enrolled their names, and it became necessary to hold a preliminary examination, for which 300 entered, and of these 120 were accepted.

Whilst there is much that is hopeful in this change, there are many symptoms which give those who have the interest of the people at heart grave cause for anxiety. The first of these is the growing impatience of restraint. It is noticeable that the girl-students are accused of imitating foreign ways, and assuming a sort of freedom which is not becoming; that they lose their modesty. It is noticeable that at the sports at Kweilin 'discipline was practically non-existent,' several times the decisions of the judges were disputed. 'Once indeed matters looked quite threatening, and some of the officials looked annoyed and perplexed.' That may seem a slight matter, and one which will be remedied by time and experience; but it appears to take a more serious form amongst the students in Japan. More than once the Minister in charge of these young students has complained that they do not submit themselves to any control. More than once they have threatened a riot. It is a strange fact that the students in Japan last year should have refused to listen to Liang Chi Chao, and should have driven him from the platform, because they accused him of being a Conservative and a reactionary. Liang Chi Chao was one of the leaders of the Reform party who ten years ago fled for his life, but already doctrines which ten years ago were deemed visionary and revolutionary have become the common property of the nation, and the hot-headed reformers of to-day will not listen to a word of caution or advice even from a man who has suffered in the cause of reform.

With this impatience of restraint there goes also impatience of method. There is a tendency to refuse the need of preparation and practice, to try to escape the discipline of education. The younger men and the more revolutionary speak and act as if China could become as Japan without even the preliminary training which Japan has undergone. In education this tendency shows itself in the haste with which schools are opened, in which a profession of Western education is made whilst the teachers are as yet wholly

unqualified to teach. In politics it shows itself in a violent denunciation of the present government, and a clamorous demand for new institutions for which the mass of the people is wholly unprepared. The government is constantly hampered in its dealings with foreign nations by the violent outbursts of indignation with which these headstrong young politicians proclaim every concession, every appeal for help, as a surrender of Chinese sovereign rights. It is constantly hindered in its efforts to educate the people for constitutional government by the unreasoning demand for the instant establishment of a republic. In religion the same tendency shows itself in impatience of old ideals, of old truths, of old moral sanctions. Chang Chih Tung foresaw this danger and warned his people of it. It was for this that he so earnestly desired a revival of true Confucianism. That revival has not come. On the contrary the new learning is undermining the old system. Amongst the students Confucius is not held in higher esteem; his teaching is too often forgotten, ignored, despised. The new learning tends to become anti-foreign, revolutionary, irreligious.

The causes of this attitude are not far to seek. In the West we sometimes hear men warn us in anxious tones of the danger which may threaten from a great uprising in the East. But the Yellow Peril has no reality for the multitude. In China, on the contrary, the common people realise and live in constant terror of a White Peril. In the Boxer rising of 1900 Dr. Ross was astonished at 'the manifestation of unheard-of hatred' which was shown by a people whom he and his fellow-helpers had always been most careful to conciliate. 'I asked,' he wrote, 'for one probable reason. . . . The reply was that the joy at the dismissal for ever thus given to the foreigner was not because of anything that we had done, but because they were now freed from the dread, ever hanging over their heads, that the foreigner was here to take possession of their land.' This is the terror which impels the Chinese people to resist at great loss the efforts of Western syndicates to exploit the natural resources of their country. It is to this that the anti-foreign agitator appeals.

It is all up! It is all up! The calamity has come. The day for the death of all us Anhui people. These foreigners long ago thought of dividing up our China, but because they could not agree on an even partition Japan and Russia came to blows, and so the event had to be postponed. Now they give all their attention to opening mines and making railways in our country. Why is this? This is the old scheme for destroying other people's countries. When they have the right to open mines, then they can easily get our money and destroy our

lives. When they have railways, then they can easily, step by step, garrison the country with foreign soldiers. . . . When these foreign soldiers are in possession they will oppress the people, rob them of their wealth, outrage their women, and desecrate their graves. My fathers and brethren, can you bear to look on this?'

That is the kind of appeal which the people understand. Nor is this terror relieved by the first lessons which the people are now receiving in geography and European history. They see in the new maps how widespread is the power of these European nations; they read how they have advanced from point to point. Wherever the white man goes the native races either become subject, or disappear. They are not exterminated by fire and sword. There proceeds from the white man a deadly influence. Before him coloured men bow to receive a yoke, or are slowly driven back and cease to be. Their land is no longer theirs. 'Now shall this multitude lick up all that is round about us, as the ox licketh up the grass of the field.'

The new learning gathered in Japan or in China does not lessen the terror of foreign aggression, nor does it encourage the Chinese people to respect or admire the foreigners whose power they fear. With widespread education, there is a widespread increase of newspapers, and a widespread circulation of books of different kinds. It is important to ask whether the idea of European character and morals presented to their minds by these books and papers is likely to appear admirable and attractive. In the newspapers they see brief and often unintelligible reports of frontier wars, scientific inventions, diplomatic disputes; they see also reports of the cases brought up for trial in the Treaty Ports; they see also advertisements. What is likely to be the effect on the opening minds of the liberal Chinese youth on reading in one single paper of the activity of French troops in Morocco, of the advance of British troops against Mohmands, of the explosion of bombs in Calcutta, of the flight of an American aeroplane, and of an assault committed by some drunken sailors in a Treaty Port? What impression will they receive of foreign character, manners and morals from reading elementary books upon physiology, geography, political science, philosophy and history, together with translations of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' 'Treasure Island,' 'Les Misérables,' 'Manon Lescaut,' 'Sherlock Holmes,' and some Japanese detective stories and cheap novels? Is it possible that

¹ Proclamation issued by the Association for the Conservation of Mines and Railways in Anhui, December 1907.

they should understand the relation of the sexes as there depicted ? When they see the placards posted by foreign merchants, when they hear of the performances of foreign ladies in amateur theatricals, when they see or hear of foreign gentlemen taking their wives and children to see the entertainments given by a strolling circus, what sort of an idea is formed in their minds of the manners and customs of the West ? They cannot but think the morals of the artistes questionable and their dress disgusting. They are accustomed in their own country to attend doubtful performances ; but they do not take their wives and children with them. Or again, when Europeans take a holiday they often forget the impression which their conduct is likely to make on Chinese onlookers. We read of such things as these taking place in a Chinese temple at a picnic :

The chairs and tables had been moved to one side, and some of our English games were being played much to the amazement of the groups of Chinese, who gazed with wonder and astonishment at the antics of the merry party. 'Puss in the Corner,' 'Tom Tiddler's Ground,' 'Base,' and 'Kiss in the Ring,' were successively played, and the place rang again with the shouts of laughter as one after another was caught, and prisoners were made and released again. Even the Chinese became excited as the fortunes of the game varied, and I saw the eyes of staid sober men who had never run since they were boys sparkling with excitement.

These things do not impress the Chinese with a sense of our dignity or morality. They are amazed, they are excited, they also despise those who so deport themselves. When a party of sailors ashore link arms and rush through the streets, driving every Chinese they meet out of their way, and striking at anyone who is not quick to avoid them, the Chinese avoid them as we avoid a mad bull, and think of them as we think of irrational beasts. The new learning teaches them to fear our power ; it does not teach them to love or to respect us. Consequently the first contact with our literature and our customs is profoundly repulsive.

Nor does the study of Western learning supply any corrective to this estimate. 'Chinese learning,' said Chang Chih Tung, 'is moral, Western learning is practical.' Surely it is a very dangerous thing that the Chinese should learn to look upon our education as indifferent to morality. Yet there is only too grave a danger lest that should become not only their mental attitude, but their practical experience. There is everywhere a tendency to divorce moral from mental education ; to consider, of the first importance in the teaching of our children the acquirement of arts and sciences,

to consider the acquirement of moral and religious principles of secondary importance ; to think that the first duty of the teacher of our youth is to show the way to present success, to make the pupil master of the means and arts of worldly progress ; to think more and more of what will enable him 'to get on' in the world, to identify our civilisation with the science and art which conduce to our comfort and prosperity ; to ascribe to our wit and wisdom all that is great in our national and personal life. In answer to the question, 'What is the source of Western greatness?' we are tempted to answer, 'Science.' Now the Chinese are in search of the secret of success, of power, as they see it exemplified in our modern history. And that answer directly appeals to them. They are eager to follow in the path by which Japan has already attained to so great an influence in the world's councils. 'If,' wrote Chien Hsün, in his report of the Hague Conference, 'China could at the next Conference win a position among the Great Powers such as that which Japan holds at the present day, what an unspeakable blessing it would be for our country!' They are persuaded that it is by the acquirement of Western methods of government, military systems, naval armaments, commercial practice, that they will attain their end. They ask from us a 'practical learning.' They sent their students to Japan to acquire 'practical learning,' and 'practical learning' they receive. And what is the result?

Chinese who acquire Western learning at home are as a class better men and better citizens than those who have received their education abroad.¹ They have thrown overboard the only compass which they possessed, and there is nothing henceforth to direct them on their course. Appetite and interest are almost the sole motives which actuate them, and able, cultivated and influential classes whom appetite and interest guide are a manifest danger to their fellows and to the State.² It cannot be denied that the indirect results of the introduction of Western civilisation and education, without decidedly religious influence, are of a disintegrating character, and are calculated to raise up strenuous opposition to the existing order and methods of government.³ 'If only a few years of hard study are given to Chinese learning and Western education is introduced, the former will soon decline ; in fact the canons of our Holy Religion will perish. The thought makes us tremble.'⁴

How much more when no heed whatever is taken of the Con-

¹ *Times* Shanghai Correspondent, Feb. 6, 1908.

² *Times*, April 17, 1908.

³ Report of China Missions Emergency Committee, 1908. ⁴ Chang Chih Tung.

Confucian moral system, and young students give all their care to a system of learning which has no moral influence! These are the causes which have brought it to pass that the students of Western learning have become, and are becoming, so great a danger to themselves and to their country, that already the Government is terrified at the results, and is restricting the flow of students to Japan, sending more and more students to Europe and America and making the teaching of Confucian ethics the foundation of all education in the Government schools.

'Chinese learning is moral, Western learning is practical.' The first and deepest wish of every friend of the Chinese nation must be that the Chinese should unlearn that lesson. Western learning is not based on materialism, nor is the greatness of Western nations. Western civilisation is rooted in Christian faith and Christian morals. That is the lesson which the East needs to learn. And who can teach that? Who can persuade them of that? Does anyone, except the Christian missionary, even attempt to teach that? The students in missionary colleges acquire Western learning, but they are neither revolutionary nor anti-foreign. The Society for the Diffusion of Christian Knowledge prepares and publishes a great quantity of useful literature, for which there is a great demand. The Bible Societies distribute an amazing number of tracts and Bibles, either complete or in portions. [In 1905, the circulation amounted to 2,663,626 copies of portions of the Bible, and 3,707,775 tracts.] These publications, coupled with the widespread preaching of mission agents, are having a marked effect. Since 1853, it is calculated that the number of Chinese Christians has been doubling every seven years. This steady growth is most remarkable and cannot fail to exercise a profound influence on the trend of events. The Christian element in the country is an element which makes for stability. It is wholly on the side of peace and orderly progress; it supplies the moral support which is so grievously needed. The Revolutionary party is powerful and rapidly increasing in numbers, but it is still a comparatively small party. Surely it would hardly be too much to say that the future of the country will turn on the issue of the struggle between these two forces, the force of revolution inspired by non-moral 'Western learning,' and the force of orderly progress inspired by Christian ideals.

ROLAND ALLEN.

ENGLISH BIRD-NAMES.

FOR the field naturalist who goes pursuing his hobby through the length and breadth of 'Merry England,' a considerable difficulty is created now and then by the very different names which denote the same creature in one part of the land and in another. Even the difference is not so misleading as the similarity between the local name of one bird in one county and of quite another bird elsewhere.

To me, coming from the fair land of Devon into a county hardly less fair—namely, Sussex—much disappointment of high-lifted hopes occurred, for a local man of the new county spoke to me of a nest which he had found as (or so I understood him) that of a 'shrike.' 'Oh, yes,' I said, 'a bird with a red back'—of course the red-backed butcher-bird was in my mind. But he replied, 'No, it be a greyish kind of bird.' So then the fat of excitement was in the fire 'sure enough.' I thought I had come upon a nest of the great grey shrike, and was full of eagerness, the more so as there appears no certain record of this bird's nesting in Great Britain; then, going to the place, under guidance of this local prophet tempted by largesse from his proper task, was shown, disgusted, the nest of an unmistakable missel-thrush. 'Shrike!' I said. 'Why did you tell me it was a shrike's nest?' Then he replied, shamefaced, 'That be the name we calls it—strike.'

So then the difference began to 'strike' me—forgive the enormity. It was 'strike,' not 'shrike,' that the man had said, and this is the local name of the missel-thrush in Sussex. It is not a bad name either, for it suggests the sound of the profane swearing with which the bird greets you when you approach its nest. I imagine that the origin of the name for which I mistook it—that of the 'shrike'—is the same, imitated from the bird's note, or from one of its notes. Both names suggest the swear words that the birds use; though their notes are much more unlike each other than are the two words in which 't' for 'h' makes all the difference. Both suggest the sounds rather well. I have not the least doubt that, looking in books, we might find many other and much cleverer suggestions for the origin of the names, but I do not know that

writers of books have a sound claim for 'verbal inspiration' of their scriptures on such a subject as this. Perhaps listening to the notes of the birds and noting how their names are said by the local people may be as good a guide as the books. As for the Sussex folk and the butcher-bird, I cannot find that they have any local name for that, or know much about it. They are not great on ornithology. The bird is common enough in the county, in parts of which the beetles and other insects which the butcher-bird loves to butcher and put on spits are numerous, but most of the rustics are content to call it 'a bird.' That is enough for them in the way of definition.

Now if it had been Devon, and a native of the county had found a missel-thrush's nest, there would have been no danger of this confusion in the name he would have used for the bird. He would have called it a 'home-screech,' or, since the aspirate is not permitted to be the occasion of a great deal of trouble to the lazy tongues of Devon, he would really call it 'ome-screech.' In its way this is indicative of the greeting which the bird will give you when you come near its home, just as is the other, the Sussex name, though it does not strive to imitate the greeting as the other does. It will screech, saying 'strike,' when you come near its home. But I am not suggesting that this is exactly how the 'home' comes into the name. It may be thus, or it may be that it is by way of being rather expressive of the singular habit of the missel-thrush, which is rather a shy bird at most seasons, of coming closely about houses and homesteads at its nesting-time, when it does most of its 'striking' or screeching. The books, again, to refer respectfully to the authorities, have an idea that the 'home,' in the Devonian name for the bird, may be really 'holm,' as if it made its nest, whenever the chance was given it, in an ilex. But I cannot find that, in fact, it shows a preference for this tree such as would give the ilex a claim to be especially the roof-tree of the missel-thrush and to have a share in its local name.

As a rule the origin of the local name is obvious—jumping to the eyes. Of names which, like the 'strike' and the 'shrike,' imitate the bird's call it would be more proper to say that they jump to the ears rather than the eyes; and of course this way of calling the bird is not confined to names that prevail in certain districts only. Many are universal: that is to say world-wide. The most familiar instance is the cuckoo. The cuckoo suggests the bird which is called in places 'the cuckoo's mate,' because it

comes to us about the same time as the cuckoo. Our usual name for it, however, is based on a peculiar action that it has : it is called the wryneck, from its way of quickly twisting its neck. In places it is called the 'snake-bird,' and sometimes this local name is referred to the same origin as our usual English name for it—as if its swift twisting of the head had something about it that is snake-like. However, I rather misdoubt this. It may be called so more probably, perhaps, from the snake-like hiss which the bird gives when any foe comes to the door of the hole in the tree down which it has made its nest. It has this note in common with other nesters down holes, such as the tits, and it is hardly to be doubted that this has been developed as a settled habit of sound because of the immunity it must give to those who have it at command from the visits of troublesome acquaintances, such as weasels, for instance. If a weasel comes to a hole in a tree and, looking in, is greeted with a hiss, he has a store of inherited experience to induce him to say 'Hullo! Snakes!' and to withdraw from investigating further. But let us not infer marvellous intelligence on the part of those that make the sibilant utterance, or conclude that they imitate the snake in order to keep off the weasel. That is the kind of human psychology which may try to read purposeful reasoning into the actions of animals that do not reason, as we understand the word, and thereby darken counsel.

But though our common parlance has a name for this bird—whether wryneck or cuckoo's mate—which is based on its habits and not on its voice, it is otherwise with its classical history. In scientific ornithology it is *Yunx torquilla*, with the second name giving recognition to its 'wry-necking trick,' but its first an admirable imitation of the bird's call. It is less exact in the monosyllabic pronunciation which we should give it in our rendering of the Latin, but if we go a little farther back we find it appearing in the Greek classical writings, and there the 'Y' is separated from the final syllable in the pronunciation. The first syllable is indicated by an iota in the Greek ; and if we pronounce this as those old Greeks probably pronounced it (I know, but do not heed, that I am here rushing in where angels fear to tread), just as a Scot would pronounce the first 'i' in 'idiot,' making it 'eediot,' then, giving to the final syllable a sound which is better suggested by writing it 'oonx,' with the weird-looking word 'ee-oonx' we get something that is really quite suggestive (certainly more so than the less ferocious looking 'yunx') of the curious and not very melodious cry of the bird.

We have spoiled some of what were originally very fair indications, so far as words can give them, of bird-names taken from their notes, by the spelling of them which has become stereotyped. Thus 'peewit' is the accepted way of spelling the alternative name—the name taken from its cry—of the lapwing or green plover, the bird which lays the 'plover's eggs.' Now and then we see it spelt 'pee-weet,' but when a writer gives it so he generally puts inverted commas on each side, which he does not trouble to do when he writes peewit, as if to say 'you might think that I am so ignorant that I do not know that peewit is the right spelling; but I do—look at the commas. Pee-weet is only a kind of joke.' It is certainly a better joke than peewit. Better still is the Scottish version of it—peesweep. Even the French *dix-huit* suggests the cry with some accuracy. And is there not that legend of Tyrwhit for the name of the soldier lying wounded and being saved by attention drawn to his case by the lapwings saying 'Tyrwhit' around him?

Doubtless in these imitations much must depend on the individual ear of the human being who hears them and tries to write them. Personally it has ever been a wonder to me how any man of normal hearing can find anything remotely like the voice of the wild goose suggested by the word 'honk'; yet that is, no doubt, how it jumps to the ear of many, for writers write it so, and it is accepted. If I were to go looking for a bird which appeared to me to say 'honk,' it would be a wild-geese chase indeed.

In some places they call the chaffinch a 'fink,' and there are those who find in this word only another form of 'finch,' as if the chaffinch, being the commonest of all finches, might be called by the generic name, rather as the sparrow, the commonest of all birds, is called bird—for that is all that sparrow means—*pajaro* (Spanish), *passer domesticus*—the domestic bird—and a sore trial at that. But the word 'fink' does suggest to me, and, I think, to most people, so accurately the monosyllabic note of the chaffinch that it is hardly possible not to suppose that those are right who trace the name to the note. Other finches are named from the colour, as goldfinch, or from the form, as bullfinch, and so on, and one of the best names—a general one—is that of 'chiff-chaff,' unmistakably from the little bird's note.

A local name which has troubled me much is one that is given in North Devon, and probably in Devon universally and elsewhere too, to the water-wagtail—'dish-washer.' What is the meaning of this? Certainly (I think it is safe to say certainly) not from the

note. But from its habits? Yes. Though it cannot be said to wash dishes literally, we may see its possible association with the process if we figure to ourselves the manner in which their dishes are washed by the folk who gave the name to the bird. Devon is a land of little streamlets, and beside the little streamlets cottages are frequent, and if you live in a cottage you do not, as a rule, find yourself equipped with a nice scullery sink and a tap of water to turn on to the dirty dish. The obvious thing to do is to take the plates and dishes down to the stream, hold them in the clear bustling water, and so, of its own gravitating force, the water will wash all your dishes for you. The process is simple. And when the water-wagtail, being a frequenter of the streams, and paying constant attention to the aquatic insect life in any case, perceives this washing of dishes going on—his experience having led him to associate it with certain choice morsels afloat in the water—he is quite sure, if he be anywhere on hand, to come and see whether there be some good luck for him in the flotsam which is going down the stream. That, I take it, is how he has come by his name among these people who wash their dishes in the rippling brook. If he is not an active dish-washer himself, he is at least a frequent and interested attendant on the process. That is quite enough to account sufficiently for his name.

It has been left for the Americans, perhaps, to achieve the greatest triumph in the way of bird-naming according to the note of the bird as it strikes the human ear. The 'whip-poor-Will' is a better suggestion in words of a bird's call than any other that I know, and it carries too, as we think of the suffering of 'Will,' the unfortunate 'whipping-boy,' just that suggestion of pathos and also of quaintness which the bird's note carries. All that subtle kind of suggestion helps the name immensely, but at the same time the three rather absurd monosyllables do give a wonderful imitation of the avine call. The 'whip-poor-Will' is a very near cousin of our own 'night-jar,' as we call him sometimes with better significance than that of his alternative name, based on a habit which never was his, of 'goat-sucker.' No doubt the 'jar' by night is intended to convey an idea of the bird's note, which is generally written 'chur,' and perhaps this could not easily be improved on.

'Yaffle' is distinctly a good local name of the loud-laughing bird, the green woodpecker. He does not precisely appear to say 'yaffle,' but the word carries a vague suggestion of his note's sound. 'Woodpecker,' of course, gives his most striking habit its right place.

Whether 'jay' is a name derived from the bird's note I hardly know, but I should guess it to be so, in whatever language it had its origin at first. The corvines are rather apt to take their names from their hoarse voices. 'Jack'-daw is, obviously, the daw that says 'Jack.' And 'daw' again is doubtless from his call, so that he is also the Jack that says 'daw.' The fact that two words spelt so differently can both indicate the note shows how arbitrary it all is. The biggest of the whole corvine family, chief of the tribe as he might be called, the raven, no doubt derives his name from a Scandinavian source, as it is rather proper he should, seeing that he is a bird of the North and an ensign which was adopted by some of the Norsemen, especially when they went a-viking. And the nearer you come to the Scandinavian way of saying the name, the more guttural raucousness you give, the closer you arrive at a reproduction of the bird's croak. 'Rook,' similarly pronounced, seems quite as like the call of that black robber as the more stereotyped 'caw,' or the 'crow' which gives the name to his nearest cousin. Trace that back to 'corvus,' if you please, and you have the nursery 'caw' again. I hardly know where we get the 'mag' from in the compound 'magpie'—probably it is just a piece of friendly familiarity—but the 'pie' of this motley bird is one of the names which jumps to the eye, so that it cannot possibly be missed.

It is an unfortunate but a necessary admission of the futility of our written words in the suggestion of sound that so large a majority of the birds which we have named from their call are those which have an unmusical, often a rasping note. We have no difficulty in finding a name for the 'corn-crake,' which suggests in its first syllable the habits of the bird, and in the second (Latin, *crex*) the quality of its voice—not strictly of melodious or soft accent—but we have not aimed, and wisely, at naming such songsters as the skylark, nightingale, or thrush by words which attempt the expression of their voice and notes. The 'whip-poor-Will' perhaps is the longest of all names which have this origin, but we are generally most successful with the names of birds whose note is a monosyllable. Certain little strings of words, or a sentence, we find here and there invented to express an imitation, such as 'A little bit of bread and no cheese,' for the often repeated melody which the yellow-hammer gives us, but it is too long for common use as the name of the bird. We give to a certain large family of birds the descriptive name of warblers, but this contains no attempt

at reproducing the warble. It is descriptive, purely. The 'barking' bird is again merely descriptive, though so aptly that Charles Darwin declares it impossible not to believe that the voice is that of a little dog; but still it makes no attempt at imitation. The case of those which we name 'chats'—stone-chat, whin-chat, wood-chat—is of course otherwise: the 'chat' gives a distinct and quite good suggestion of the note of the birds, the first syllable indicating their respective habitats. In the classic story, when the London street singer began his sentimental ditty of 'I would I were a bird,' and the ribald street-boy shouted at him, 'Which yer was—a reg'lar howl,' the candid critic seems to have supposed that by the addition of the aspirate (always achieved with effort and with triumph by those of his kind) he was indicating quite a different idea from that which the unaspirated owl would convey. And so he was, no doubt, so far as the impression given to his audience was concerned, but etymologically there is not the distinction. The two are the same whether with the aspirate or without—'owl' or 'howl'—both from the *ulula*—so that when we go a little further in the same direction and call one species of the bird a 'screech-owl' we are only tautologically adding an insulting description to insulting imitation, telling the bird twice over what a hideous noise he makes, though really there is much attractiveness in the eery cry of the owl at night. He will forgive us. Oliver Wendell Holmes has a story of a precisely grammatical owl at Boston which said 'To-whit, To-whom' instead of the uneducated 'To-whit, To-who' of the vulgar bird. But this is exceptional.

Looking at these and other instances we find a certain principle running through all the nomenclature. It seems that when the bird's characteristic note was short and could be suggested easily by a word, then that word was taken for its name: then, failing that, a descriptive name was given—descriptive it might be of its colour, as blackbird; or of the striking colour of a certain part, as red-breast; or of a general appearance of colour, as pie; but these possibilities would very soon be exhausted, and for the rest the names have to be as descriptive as they can be made of habit or habitat.

And when we consider them all, we are much disposed to agree with the spirit of the child's observation: 'What a clever man Adam must have been, to find names for all the animals!' Presumably there was spacious leisure in the Garden of Eden.

HORACE G. HUTCHINSON.

MISS PRIMROSE.

'TAKE that there tin can,' said mother, sharp-like, 'and cut off and feed them two new lambs of the black ewe's. See that the bit of rag's round the spout too, or I'll show yer.'

I could see as mother were a bit roused by something, an' I shifted quick and laid hold of the can feyther had brought the sheep's milk in, and I went across to the shed to feed them lambs.

I seed Miss Primrose then, standin' in the middle of the yard, with her bicycle leanin' agin th' gate, and her eyes all blue and shining and dark like them periwinkles in the garden, and I stood staring at her all soft-like, and she went on smiling with her eyes, and her mouth was all solemn, and says she to me: 'Could you lend me a pump, and oh, are you going to feed the dear little lambs, and may I see?'

'Theer's t' pump,' I said, all dazed-like, pointing to it. Mother were swilling out milk-cans and pumping water like mad. An' then she laughed again, an' when I see her teeth—pearls they was, and no error, and I felt all soft agen when she said she meant a bicycle pump, and I said perhaps Higginses had one, up the lane, and I dropped the lambs' can, and run, and mother shouted after me an' I took no notice, and then Miss Primrose (mother told me at after), she picked up the can and said, What a funny long spout it had, and *she* was going to feed the lambs while the dear little boy had gone to find the pump, and she made mother stop messin' with them cans and come and show her where the black ewe was, and she said the ewe's milk looked like honey, and she laughed when the lambs rushed at the can and hurt their silly selves agen it, and she said weren't they strong little creatures? and what fun it was, and she was so glad her tyre had gone down, and didn't mother just love taking care of all these darlings? And mother said that was all very well, but wait till you'd fifty of 'em under a fortnight old, and more coming every hour, and how would Miss Primrose like to get up in the middle of the night and tend the weakly ones, and for her part she thanked her Maker when the spring was well over, and all the creatures, calves and

chicks and ducklings and goslings and pigs, standing well on their own legs, and if you sent Peter off on an errand you could think yourself lucky if you saw him back in two hours. Just like mother. She's always sayin' things about me behind my back.

When I came back, Miss Primrose looked at me in the way that makes me all curl up inside, and send cold water down my back, and then showed me how to pump up her tyre and let me do it all by myself, and she told mother that I was very tall for eleven and that I had a Gainsbrer face. I did wish I knew what she meant by that, and when she'd gone I run in and looked at myself in the parlour mirror to see if there was a smudge on my nose, and it wasn't no more dirty than usual, and mother said 'Come out of that parlour at once, with them boots,' and I went out the front way, not sayin' nothing to nobody, and forgetting what feyther had said about weedin' that there far bed in the garding, and making for the long pasture all in a daze like, with Miss Primrose's smile a-curling me up and upsetting me and making me feel that mother might sauce till she was blue in the face for all I cared. I wanted to run some more errands for 'er, and let her look at me like that agen. I wanted to see her all the time. I've never had nobody look at me like that afore—not as if they liked looking at me. Mother always looks at me as if I wanted my face washing, and feyther looks at me as if he was thinkin' which was the next best place to fetch me a clout on, an' our William looks at me as if I 'adn't ought to be let live at all.

I never went home to my dinner, but just stopped out in the pasture and ate some apples I'd happened to pick up in case I needed 'em, when mother sent me to the store room for onions before breakfast. When I went in they was all having their teas, and mother boxed me, and feyther fetched me a clout, and our William put out his foot and tripped me, and I never see such big boots as our William takes, an' mother said she'd saved me a bit of pie in the oven, and where in mercy's sake had I been off to with all the work and errands wanting doing, and William away fetching home the last lot of ewes and feyther seeing to the calves and all?

I seed by his face as feyther were thinking of fetching me another clout, so I told 'em I had a nedache and I'd bin asleep in the field, and mother said it was one of Peter's lies, but feyther mustn't hit me for fear I'd happened to tell the truth for once by accident. And William said, 'Not likely,' and then they all began talking about Miss Primrose from the Rectry, and how

pretty-faced and likely-looking she was, and how all the young fellows was courting her, and how she didn't seem to be in no hurry making up her mind, and that Mr. 'Ayes, so conceited like with 'is eyeglass, hadn't no chance at all. Feyther said, and mother said as how if she'd any sense she'd take Mr. Cartwright with all his father's money behind him. William said as how he wouldn't have minded having her himself if he'd been axed. And I tried to kick his shins under the table, but he never noticed, along of the size of his boots being so big.

'They're wanting a knife and boot boy at the Rectry,' mother said, putting the basket with the last chicks in the middle of the table alongside of the butter, and lettin' 'em jump in an' out amongst the tea-things. 'Asked me if I knew of a likely honest, trustworthy, indoostrious boy, she did. Lord, she's a deal to learn.'

Feyther had his mouth full, and he said he could a told 'er there was no such thing living.

'Not even in a mooseum,' said our William, laughing noisy like.

'Ay,' said mother, 'I told 'er as I'd never knowed a boy yet you could trust out of your sight. "They never strike stroke any of 'em when you aren't watchin' 'em," says I.'

'And not often then,' said our William, pouring his tea in his saucer. Low 'abits he has. I learned better nor that at the school treat.

'Lie?' said feyther. 'Ay, like a horse kicking. Prig!—Prig anything eatable as they can lay their 'ands on. Don't tell me.'

No one was a-telling him. I go up when I'd done and give our William's elbow a shove an' made 'im slop his tea, and then I run out of the 'ouse, and I run down the lane, with my head all buzzing and singing, and I run all the way to the Rectry, and I seed Miss Primrose on the lawn in a blue dress, and no 'at on, and I run up to her quick and sez I to 'er:

'Please, do you want a boy?'

An' Miss Primrose turned to a tall gentleman with a neyeglass and sez, 'It's the Gainsbrer boy, Mr. Hayes. Look at his cherub cheeks and his angel eyes.' And the gentleman put his hand under my chin quite kind, and lifted my face up, and said I were a nice little chap. And another gentleman, a stoutish one, said Miss Primrose had a powerful 'magination.

I wanted to kick his shins same as I do our William's, but his

boots was thinner, and I daresent, and I said my name was Peter, and I was going in twelve, and I was in the fourth standard, but I'd had the 'oopin cough, and though the danger was over I was not going back to school till Whitweek, and could I come and clean their knives and boots for 'em till then ?

'Eighteenpence a week,' said Miss Primrose. 'And weed the garden when you have time.'

'Yes, miss,' said I.

'You're to be nice and obliging to mother and me, and try to save the cook's steps,' Miss Primrose went on,

I nodded. I was feeling terrible hot while they all looked at me so curious-like.

'All right,' said Miss Primrose. 'It's a bargain. Can you clean boots ?'

I remembered the way our William hadn't never bin pleased with his Sunday boots when I'd done 'em.

'P'haps Cuke 'ull learn me,' I suggested timidly. An' that was the beginning of it. I was goin' to see Miss Primrose every day, and do things to make her look at me like as if she liked doin' it, and mother and feyther sauced a bit at first, but they gave in at last, and feyther said perhaps the rector would make me work, for it was more than he could do, and mother said I was to keep my fingers to myself and not go near the larder, and she hoped to goodness they kept things locked, and our William said to tell no more lies than I could help tellin'. When I'm grown up I shall give our William such a thundering good hiding as he's never had in his life.

I liked being at the Rectry very much at first. Miss Primrose used to come into the kitchen, and smile and push 'er 'air out of her eyes—it was all light and twiny, and say, 'Where's that Peter boy ? I want him.' And I'd drop everything and run to 'er, and once when it was the knife powder the lid busted off, and it went all over Cuke's clean floor and she sauced something awful.

I could a' done with the work very well if it wasn't for Cuke. She'd got a nasty underhand way of standing over and watching till you'd done, and then making you do it all over again proper. I found a very good way with them knives. The board was on a big chest in the back kitchen, and whenever Cuke was stirring something with her back turned I used to drop a knife down behind the chest and go on rubbin' as if nothing had happened,

and then the next time there wasn't so many to do. I hid two big 'uns in an old roll of red carpet under the stairs, and I dropped two little 'uns down a grid.

After that, I got through the cleanin' very quick, and Miss Primrose praised me for it, and it wouldn't never have been found out if Jane hadn't run short when she was laying the dinner and began looking them up. She couldn't make 'em more than five large and seven small, she said, instead of twelve of each, and Cuke said, 'It's that dratted boy. Peter, where have you bin and put them knives?'

'I said I'd never seen no knives, and wherever could they have got to, Cuke? and perhaps they might have fallen down behind the chest by accident.'

And then Cuke fetched me a clout and Jane boxed me, and they pulled the chest out and made me find the others too, and they was all red rust and it took me a whole day to get 'em right. All along of Cuke's nastiness too. I heard her say to Jane that there was something about them round red cheeks of Peter's as fairly asked for it. She's a deal too ready with 'er 'ands is Cuke, but I'd a stood more than that for Miss Primrose, and yet I couldn't do nothing really nice for 'er—not like all the young fellers did as wanted to please 'er. I couldn't go no rides with her, nor mend her bicycle. I did use to be let wash it for 'er, till she found me swishing buckets of water over it, and lettin' it dry by itself in the sun, and then she just looked solemn and said I was a lazy little boy, an' p'raps she'd better do it herself next time.

And then I were so sorry that I could have cried—sw'elp me. And I thought an' thought an'—

Jane used always to try to get a nice quiet read when she was dusting the droring room, and I heard her tell Cuke it didn't do to let yerself get narrer, and I heard her telling Cuke all about a tale she'd been glancing at, where a butcher boy sent a bunch of white violets every morning to a beautiful lady; and I went cold all over, and thought of Percy Simms as went to school with me, an' his feyther's a butcher, and I was as good as him, and I'd given 'im a good hiding many a time, and he was only in the third standard, and what a chance to make Miss Primrose look at me again like as if she liked doing it.

'All by secret he sent 'em,' said Jane.

'Where was the sense of that?' said Cuke, short-like.

'More nobler and romantic,' said Jane. 'And just the same

in the end, because she'd bin and guessed the truth and liked 'im for being so backward in comin' forward.'

'Silly, I call it,' said Cuke. 'Lend a hand with them tin-loaves, Jane. I can smell 'em burning. I wish Miss Primrose 'ud make up what she's pleased to call 'er mind. If she's waitin' for Mr. 'Ayes—'E'll never speak. 'E's got nothing. Why doesn't she take one of the others?'

Next morning I went out into the gardin, directly I'd finished master's boots ('smeary' he said they was afterwards), and I looked for violets, and there was no violets, and then I thought of what her name was, and the primroses looked just like her light 'air too, and I picked a little tiny bunch of 'em and tied 'em up with a bit of pink cotton from Jane's workbox that I'd prigged when she wasn't looking, and I slipped it into one of Miss Primrose's shoes when I carried 'em upstairs in my stocking feet to save Jane's steps, and put 'em outside her door, and run down quick so that Jane shouldn't be sauced for letting me. And I was feart to death when I seed Miss Primrose afterwards, but she never said nothing to me, an' the next day I did it again, and the next and the next and nobody never found out. But on Sunday morning Miss Primrose came into the passage and called me, and I dropped Jane's Sunday shoe into the cat's saucer and run. I always drop everythin' and run when Miss Primrose calls me. She was standing in the hall quite serious like, an' her eyes was not smilin', and her lips was all trembly and queer, and I thought she was going to be angry with me.

'Peter,' she said, 'did *you* put those primroses in my shoes?'

'Yes, miss,' I said all sudden-like. There wasn't no time to think of nothing else to say.

'Peter,' she said slowly, 'did you—was it your own idea?' She looked awful strange, and I thought there was going to be a fuss, and I wasn't such a silly as to let on again.

'No, miss,' says I, innocent.

'Who gave them to you for me?'

'I don't know,' said I, soft-like.

'Was it—was it one of the gentlemen who comes here?'

'Yes, miss,' said I, quite glad of the help.

'Which one?' She was all red and queer, like as if she was going to cry. 'Oh, which was it, Peter?'

'He said as 'ow I wasn't to tell on 'im, miss.'

'Oh, Peter! But you will!'

'I couldn't, miss. He'd give me a good hiding if I did.'

'Oh, Peter—was it the tall one with the eyeglass?' She was awful eager.

'I dussent say, miss.'

'It wasn't Mr. Pewbury—the red-haired gentleman? Oh, I do hope it wasn't *him*.'

I shifted from one foot to the other, and wished all at onst that I'd left them messing primroses alone. Miss Primrose took my face in her hands.

'Look me in the eyes, Peter. Was it Mr. Cartwright? Oh, don't tell me that it was the little stout gentleman who gives you sixpence that put you up to this!'

I told her all of a sudden the truth, that I was afraid I'd just dropped Jane's Sunday shoe into the milk, and perhaps I'd better——

'Come into the garden with me, Peter. I've something serious to say to you.'

I wriggled.

'Cuke 'ull sauce me if I don't go and fill them buckets of coal for her, miss.'

'Never mind cook now.'

I shuffled unwillingly down the path after her (my boots was awful big, because mother had bought them for me to grow to), and when she came to the seat by the sundial she sat down and pulled me up to her and put her hands on my shoulders and ruffled my hair up, and said:

'You're a dear pretty boy, Peter, and I could kiss you.' And there wasn't nobody about, so she went and did it, and I didn't mind so much after all. It had a soft feeling, and her hair smells like wallflowers when you're quite near to it.

'Peter,' she said, and her eyes was all wet and funny. 'If you liked someone very much, and you thought they didn't like you because they never did anything nice to show it, and if all at once they paid you the prettiest compliment in the world, what would you do?'

I thought a moment.

'If it was Cuke I should know as she wanted Jane to fetch sixpenn'orth after tea,' said I. And so she would.

Miss Primrose looked shocked.

'Oh, Peter!' said she. 'You mustn't tell tales, you know. And cooking is thirsty work. But suppose it was to me, Peter, the person paid the compliment, not Jane.'

'Do you mean one of them fellers that feyther says is courting?' I asked thoughtfully.

She went all red again.

'Oh, Peter. You're an impossible little boy. Do tell me the truth about the primroses.'

'The real trewth?' I asked in surprise.

'Of course.'

I thought awful deep. I *did* want to make her smile at me with her eyes agen. I didn't like her to cry. She didn't want it to be Mr. Pewbury. She had said as much, nor yet the little stout gentleman. She must have wanted it to be the other man,—the eyeglass one who had jogged my chin. Well, if there was going to be a bust-up about them primroses, better him than me. As fer telling the trewth, it would have bin silly.

'It was him with the glass eye,' said I, shuffling my feet again.

And then all at onst Miss Primrose gave a deep sigh, and the smile came into her eyes, so that I felt all crinkly again, and she gave me another kiss, and told me that my mouth was like a Cupid's bow, and *made* for kissing. And she gave me a soft little shake, and told me to go and do my work like a good boy, and all the time she looked at me just as if she liked doing it. Nobody else never looks at me like that. I *was* glad I hadn't been soft and let on that it was me.

I'd nearly done all my knives when I suddenly heard Jane say: 'Lor', Cuke love, just come 'ere.' She was looking out of the kitchen winder.

Cuke said, 'Well I never—an' 'im too! Whatever's bin an' given 'im the pluck to speak 'is mind?'

'Someone must a' give 'im a good shove,' said Jane.

I crept up softly behind and peeped between them two, and there was Miss Primrose walking down the garden path with the tall gentleman, 'and in 'and, and lookin' at 'im as she 'ad used to look at me. Just as if she liked it. She didn't ought to a-looked at no one else like that.

'Something's bin an' gone an' 'appened to bring them two together,' said Cuke, but I sniffed, and Jane turned round sudden and run her elbow in my eye.

'Look out there,' said she. 'Who're you listenin' at now? You mind, Peter, or you'll get something you don't like.'

'I'm always getting somethink as I don't like,' said I, wishing I'd brought an ankercher.

'Yes,' said Cuke. 'The gardiner's bin asking who's bin pickin' his best primroses and Polly Anthus and what not.'

I scorned to tell the truth now.

'It wasn't me,' I said at once. 'I've never seen no primroses, Cuke.'

But when I'd done, I run 'ome an' told mother I wasn't goin' to work at the Rectry no more, and mother boxed me an' said had Cuke caught me with my fingers in anythin'? and feyther fetched me a clout and said I were just in time to fetch them buckets for the pig-swill, and our William tripped me up, and said I could just run to the shop for an ounce of twist for him, but I never took no notice of none of 'em till I'd finished my tea.

Goin' back to the Rectry? Me? Not likely. I wasn't going to be asked no more questions about them there primroses.

DOROTHEA DEAKIN.

AN IRISH RAJAH.

GLIMPSES of him—this bold Irishman, George Thomas, once independent sovereign of Hurrianah, and lord of some eight hundred villages—authentic glimpses, wherein the modern eye can gratefully recognise a human being, are extremely rare. From his biographer, one Captain William Francklin, of the Honourable East India Company's Service—who printed a quarto about him at Calcutta by subscription in 1803, sans punctuation, sans spelling, sans taste, sans almost everything to make the large dim pages in any way luminous to us—there is little but vague fact to be gleaned. What, indeed, could otherwise be expected from a biographer to whom his hero under all circumstances is always *Mr. Thomas*? 'The lives of the people within the fort were granted, but Mr. Thomas compelled them to pay him 50,000 rupees.' Above all, from an author who, when Mr. Thomas, a native of Tipperary and a common sailor (though some say a quartermaster), deserts his ship, one of his Britannic Majesty's, and starts from Madras on that strange and adventurous career up country which was to end twenty years later in defeat and capture by Scindiah, could be found to write: 'The activity of his mind overcoming the lowliness of his situation, he determined to quit the ship, and embrace a life more suitable to his ardent disposition.'

It is not, in fact, until within eight months of George Thomas's untimely death, prematurely, at the age of forty-six, that one really sees him; and then not in the company of Captain Francklin, his biographer. It is Lieutenant-Colonel James Skinner, a 'country-born' in the employment of Scindiah, who shows him to us; a 'country-born' being the offspring of an Englishman and a native woman (lady, as in this instance one might call her, seeing she was the daughter of a zemindar, a country gentleman), and by the rules of the Honourable Company debarred, by the mere misfortune of birth, from entering either their military or civil services. Wherefore the 'country-borns,' of whom in these days there were numbers—Colonel Skinner's father, an ensign in the Company's army, having himself had six—sought employment elsewhere;

either by going to sea, or into trade, or, as in James Skinner and Robert his brother's cases, by carving their several ways to fortune in the native princes' pay. So it happened that both James and Robert Skinner were fighting for Scindiah against George Thomas, Rajah of Hurrianah, and were present at mess when, after his final defeat and capture at Hansi, his capital, the Rajah came pacifically to dine with them. Robert Skinner, indeed, had already done his best to kill him, during the assault on Hansi fort; and would perhaps have succeeded, but for the Rajah's coat of mail. The gallant Irishman showed his appreciation of the effort by asking especially to be introduced to his assailant. He embraced him affectionately, and gleefully pointed out the dent on his belt made by the active young country-born's spirited attack.

The dinner, of conquerors and the conquered, took place outside Hansi on December 21, 1801, under the presidency of a Frenchman, Major Louis Bourquoin, who, in the absence of the famous Perron, commanded Scindiah's army. They were all very merry (Skinner says Thomas had for some time past taken to the bottle) until Bourquoin thoughtlessly proposed the toast 'Let us drink to the success of Perron's army.' Whereupon poor defeated Thomas not only burst into tears but forthwith drew his hanger, crying, 'One Irish sword is worth a hundred Frenchmen.' It was at any rate too much for Bourquoin (an arrant coward, according to Skinner), for he hastily retired; either to hide himself, or for help. To the soldiers who came running in, Skinner shouted that they were to keep off, it was only a Sahib who was drunk; the Sahib being demonstrably Thomas with the drawn sword, bawling to them in Hindustanee to take notice how he had 'made the d——d Frenchman run like a jackal.' Peace was at last restored by Thomas being presently persuaded to put up his weapon and resume his seat. Then the discreet Bourquoin returned, explanations ensued, and they swore the customary eternal friendship of the inebriate.

But there still remained to get the tipsy Rajah safely back to his quarters, a bungalow situate on the bank of the Umtee tank in Hansi fort; so James Skinner rode on ahead into the town, to warn the sentries not to challenge him or his bodyguard, foreseeing further trouble from the probable unsoldierly incoherence of the reply. By ill-luck, when at last he came, the Rajah rode up to the Bursee gate, where were a naik and six sepoy who had not been warned of his condition, and to whom on their challenge the Rajah unconnectedly replied he was the 'Sahib Bahoudoor.' It was

perhaps true he was that, the great Sahib, but it was by no means the correct countersign, and the sentry refused to let him pass. Again Thomas wept, demanding of his escort 'Could anyone have stopped the Sahib Bahoudoor at this gate but one month ago?' Encouraged by their defiant shout of 'No!' he at once attacked the naik and cut off the unfortunate man's right hand; and there for some time in the moonlight he strode up and down in front of the gate, challenging the universe, while Captain Hearsey (one of the only three European officers in his service) and several of his sowars in vain tried to lay hold of him. At last he was captured by a rissaldar, who managed to lay hold of him from behind; Hearsey disarmed him, and, bundling him into a palankeen, they carried him off to bed. In the morning came headache and sincere repentance. He gave the naik five hundred rupees for his maimed limb, and sent a humble apology to the still-scared Bourquoin. He was indeed dangerous when in liquor, but always very sorry and apologetic afterwards. Captain Francklin makes much the same report of him, at greater length and with his own peculiar punctuation, when he writes: 'The ebullitions of hasty wrath, not unfrequently rendered his appearance ferocious, yet, this only occurred in instances where the conviviality of his temper obscured his reason.'

Of George Thomas's early years in the country, not much is authentically known. He had little to say about them to his biographer, beyond the vague statement that for about five years, from 1782 to 1787, he had resided with the Polygars in Southern India. They, who were a not very warlike militia of tributary landlords, holding their estates by military tenure (for the most part in the neighbourhood of Tinnevely) probably employed him in the reorganisation of their artillery, a department in which he was thenceforth to prove himself a specialist. But five years of such work, with no great likelihood of further personal advancement by fighting, was enough for him, and in 1787 he wandered away up country to Delhi, there to meet and enter the service of the Begum Somroo, 'a lady,' according to Francklin, 'well known in the History of the Transactions of Modern Times.' The Begum Somroo, 'this gallant female,' as Francklin also elsewhere calls her, was the daughter of a Mogul nobleman in distress, who after her father's death had married Somroo in gratitude, more or less, for the assistance he had given her in preserving her estates in the

Doab against the Mahrattas. Somroo was a German, an adventurer of a very bad type, whose real name, says Bishop Heber, who met the widow in 1824, was Sommers; 'a bloody agent in the cruelties of Meer Cossim,' and deeply implicated in the massacre of the English at Patna in 1763. Nor had the good Bishop a much higher opinion of the Begum, when she one day came to call and tried to placate him with a present of fruit. She was a Christian, a Roman Catholic (so had been Somroo), and the Bishop tells a story of her which goes far to explain the un-Christian malignancy of expression he had at once noted in his diary. It appears the Begum had formerly had in her service a nautch girl, of whom she was violently jealous; so she had the poor creature shut up, by way of starving her to death. But knowing the girl was popular (indeed, too much beloved) and fearing a rescue, she had her lowered into an underground chamber in the palace, immediately beneath her own. Then she had the opening bricked up, and, dragging her bed across it, slept there overhead night after night in complete tranquillity, listening to the groans below growing gradually fainter until they altogether ceased. Of such remorseless quality was George Thomas's new patroness, known far and wide to the natives as 'Ornament of her Sex,' and raised by Shah-Aulum, the Delhi king, to the dignity of his 'most beloved Daughter.' Somroo the German had died in 1778, and so long as the Begum remained a widow she and her fortunes prospered.

In her service, at Sirdhanna, her capital, some eighteen miles from Meerut of tragic memory, George Thomas remained for five years, an important official among the few Europeans employed in her army. Francklin, who wrote an altogether unreadable history of Shah-Aulum, gives us a glimpse of him and his gallantry in 1788; though, indeed, at the time Francklin wrote his book (in 1798) he had no idea the European he referred to was Thomas. That the Rajah afterwards told him, when they met many years later at Berhampore, in 1802. It all happened during the fight at the fort of Gocul Ghur, when the Begum with three battalions of sepoys and a 'respectable artillery, served by European cannoneers,' took the field in person on her king Shah-Aulum's side, against a recalcitrant zemindar who refused to pay his taxes. The fight was going badly, and Shah-Aulum seemed likely to be beaten, mainly due to the zemindar attacking his rear from the village and a sortie being made at the same time from the fort; when the 'gallant female' stepped into her palankeen, and at the head of a hundred only of her sepoys,

and accompanied by Thomas with one gun, a six-pounder, charged into the thickest of the fight. So masterfully did Thomas work his gun, gorged to the muzzle with grape-shot, that after a brief struggle the zemindar fled, and the doubtful battle was won. Henceforth his rise was rapid, and at Sirdhanna he might no doubt have spent his days in opulence and dignity, but for two significant facts; one that he imprudently married a slave girl whom the Begum had adopted, and the other that the Begum herself was weak enough to fall a victim to the wiles of one of her other adventurers, a German called Levasso by Francklin, but whose real name was Vaissaux. 'An unfortunate attachment,' however,' says Francklin, 'which she formed for one of those officers, occasioned her severe vexation and distress; and, inconsistently with her usual prudence, she had granted him her hand in marriage.' Thereupon, Sirdhanna, owing to Vaissaux's intrigues against him, grew too hot for Thomas (of whose wife, by the way, throughout one never hears another word) and he withdrew to Anopsheer, the frontier station of the British army in those parts, with some two hundred and fifty men—of the Begum's, one supposes—there to wait in patience for what fortune might still have in store.

It is characteristic of Francklin that with the Begum Somroo he was entirely charmed, could see nothing in her but what was attractive. He describes her as 'small in stature, but inclined to be plump. Her complexion very fair, her eyes black, large, and animated. Her dress perfectly Hindoostany, and of the most costly material. She speaks the Persian and Hindoostany languages with fluency, and in her conversation is engaging, sensible, and spirited.' The fact is, the lady had been polite to him, when in 1796 the gallant Captain had spent a fortnight 'near her hospitable mansion.' She was at that time about forty-five, and Francklin unctuously adds that, in the possession of her jaghire (from which she had by a mutiny in the previous year, 1795, been ousted) 'it is the wish of every feeling heart she may long continue.' She was still continuing there, though with circumscribed authority, in 1824, when Bishop Heber of Calcutta met her on one of his northern tours, and noted the forbidding cast in her large, black, animated eyes. Perhaps the little incident of the nautch girl's murder had taken place in the interval, to account for it.

At Anopsheer, Thomas did not have long to wait for fresh employment. He had left the Begum's service towards the end

of 1792, and early in 1793 he received overtures from a Mahratta chief with the astonishing name of Appakandarow (in reality, Appa Khunde Rao : Francklin spells most names, proper and otherwise, phonetically), a chief of distinction, once in Scindiah's service and discharged from it for his failure to invade Bundelcund successfully in 1790 ; since when, as the rebellious Irish used to say, he had been 'on his outing.' Him Thomas at once joined with his two hundred and fifty horsemen, receiving at the same time orders to raise a further force of a thousand infantry and a hundred cavalry for the purpose of reducing the disturbed district of Mewatty, south-west of Delhi. Whether the district belonged to Appa, or whether he merely saw in the harrying of it a means of making himself obnoxious to Scindiah, is by no means clear ; in any event, Thomas was commissioned to reduce it, and that funds might not be wanting was invested with certain *pergunnahs* (country villages and estates), whence to draw rupees, by force, if necessary, and pay his men. Accounts between them were to be balanced every six months, and, as an early assurance of confidence, Appa 'presented Mr. Thomas with two guns, some ammunition, and a few bullocks.' At Thajarah, in the centre of the district, took place the first fight, clearly caused by the villagers stealing one of his horses on a dark and rainy night from the very heart of his encampment. The Thajarah men, says Skinner, soon gave Thomas a taste of their well-known quality by so cleverly robbing him. Thomas's reply next day was of the usual six-pounder order ; but unfortunately the gun stuck fast in a nullah, the 750 men he had already managed to raise fell by loss and desertion to 300, and it took all his boldness and resource to extricate them and escape disaster. That he did escape, however, is evident, since Thajarah not only ultimately gave back the horse but paid a year's arrear of rent. It was a village, Francklin enthusiastically points out, which, whomever it really belonged to, had never been subdued by the Begum Somroo. Followed, then, the burning of other villages in the district and further prompt payment of arrears. At Mundaka, after a fight with the zemindars, he received 4000 rupees, and after a quarrel with Appa on the delicate question of plundering, 14,000 more when they met at Delhi to balance accounts. So uniformly successful, in fact, was he in raising money, that the Begum and the Mahratta governor of Delhi joined their forces to watch him and see that he by no means raised too much.

¶ Meantime, Appa was himself in trouble ; his troops had mutinied

and held him prisoner in the fort of Kotepootelee. Thomas came at once to the rescue, and Appa managed with his assistance to escape. They were pursued, however, and it was not till Appa by Thomas's advice showed himself on an elephant to the troops 'with the happiest result' (that, and the promise of speedy payment of arrears of pay) that peace was restored. Thomas, in short, had the real adventurer's gift of managing the native, whether chieftain, sepoy, or villager. Nor was Appa ungrateful, for on their safe arrival at Kanounde he adopted him as his son, gave him 3000 rupees for an elephant and palankeen suitable to his dignity, and increased his force by two hundred infantry and as many cavalry. Further, he presented him in perpetuity with the *pergunnahs* of Jyjur, Byree, Mandoté, and Phadota, of the annual revenue of a lac and a half of rupees. To be the adopted son of Appa Khunde Rao with an income of 15,000*l.* a year (to say nothing of savings) was not a bad first year's work in his new service, and might even have satisfied the rapacity of a Barry Lyndon; more especially one who had started life in the country as a common sailor.

But *qui a terre a guerre*, and George Thomas, the wealthy estate owner, was always having to fight someone; either zemindars who refused to pay him rent, or private foes of Appa's, or combined forces destined by such authorities as there were in those disturbed parts to ruin them both. And he always fought, and fought successfully. So uniformly successful was he, indeed, all through 1794-95, that orders were sent to Appa (from Scindiah, he declared) to discharge him from his service 'as a dangerous person.' That, at any rate, was Appa's account, who appeared to be growing afraid of him and his innumerable victories. Afterwards, on Thomas's refusal to accept dismissal on any terms, Appa apologised for the deceit, admitting that Scindiah had sent no such orders, and they made friends again, though scarcely on the old terms. It was base of Appa, for in 1794, when detained in Delhi by Scindiah's new lieutenant-general, Luckwah, on account of a pretended debt, Thomas had helped him to raise the money on mortgage, and thereby lost three of his *pergunnahs*. But then, says Thomas, with an Irishman's ready chivalry, 'I had no cause of complaint when my Principal was ruined.'

Nor was his old friend, the Begum Somroo, behindhand in her efforts to do him harm. Her marriage with Vaissaux had caused such dissatisfaction among her subjects that the soldiers mutinied, and to oust them both invited Somroo's son by a former wife,

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Zuffur Yab Khan, living in retirement in Delhi, to come out and command them. So the Begum, who had got a large force together to fight and crush Thomas, who with another force of about equal strength was quite ready for the encounter, found herself obliged to flee; and afterwards, being surrounded by her own cavalry, took to her palankeen, and, drawing the curtains, pretended suicide. The unlucky Vaissaux actually did kill himself, and for three days his body was exposed to the insults of the rabble, and afterwards thrown naked into Kerwah ditch. Wherefore the Begum, instead of ruining Thomas, found herself a close prisoner, while Zuffur went to Sirdhanna, her capital, and for some months reigned there peaceably enough in her stead.

From the Begum Somroo such conduct was only to be expected, for ever since leaving her service she had been Thomas's active enemy; but from Appa, his adoptive father and newly declared friend, the unsuspecting Irishman looked for no such treatment. Yet Appa, after meeting him at Narnoul and presenting him with another elephant, a palankeen, and some valuable shawls, induced him to visit him in his private residence, with the idea of there privily making away with him. It was just the situation to inspire George Thomas's best qualities, and he bore himself therein so hardly that Appa was completely nonplussed. 'Mr. Thomas,' says Francklin, 'perceiving his confusion, took this opportunity of paying him the customary compliment and retiring unmolested; though fully determined to visit him no more.' He determined, in fact, he would no longer serve him, in any capacity, and went off into his own Mewatty country to collect rents; for which, as always, he had to fight. Even in his own country Appa would not let him alone, and treacherously despatched a force of Ghosseins after him to attack his camp. But Thomas, being duly warned, attacked first and routed them; and to Appa, who, on being reproached with this fresh perfidy, sent various inadequate excuses (pleading illness, and the stupidity of dependents who *will* mistake orders), returned the indignant answer 'Such has been the fate of all who have served you with fidelity.' To lure him back into his service, especially from Scindiah, who begged the loan of the ever-victorious one to protect the Mahratta possessions from Sikh attack, Appa offered him new *pergunnahs*, of Panniput, Sineput, and Karnaul, with which to raise and pay for more infantry, cavalry, and guns. These Thomas graciously accepted, and with fresh forces marched against the threatening Sikhs, who immediately

retired. Nay, more; so generous was he, so divinely forgiving, that he even replied favourably to the Begum Somroo's pitiful petition to be restored to her jaghire. Zuffur Yab Khan was at once defeated, robbed also, and sent back again to private life in Delhi; and the amazed Begum found herself once more firmly seated on the throne at Sirdhanna, where, as we have already seen, 'it is the wish of every feeling heart she may long continue.'

Such, very briefly, is the account (Thomas's own, it must always be remembered, delivered by himself to his biographer) of his early wonderful successes. And now, in 1797, Appa Khunde Rao dies, drowning himself in the Jumna, tortured with disease and doubtless overweighted with the knowledge of his senseless treachery, and his nephew Wamum Rao succeeds him; a youth 'better adapted,' Thomas declares, 'to the life of an accomptant than that of a general,' and whose first official act was to demand back from Thomas the *pergunnahs* settled on him by his uncle Appa. For them, on Thomas's haughty refusal, they fought, with the usual disastrous consequences to the foe, and Wamum, driven into Kanoonde fort, sent to beg humbly for negotiations. They were only broken off by the advance of the Sikhs, who temerarily invaded the northern portions of Thomas's possessions, and against them he at once marched, to Karnaul. Four battles followed, somewhat doubtful ones, in which Thomas lost five hundred men and the Sikhs a thousand; whereupon a treaty was made and the Sikhs retired, leaving Thomas free to deal once more with Wamum, who, sensibly enough, declined the combat. Failing Wamum, Thomas, being in want of funds, raided Oreecha, a large rich town belonging to the Rajah of Jeypore, stormed the fort there and carried off a ransom of 52,000 rupees; duly impressed by which, the valour of it all and the fact that the enemy was in funds again, Wamum Rao made friends with him, deciding it safer after all to leave him in possession of Uncle Appa's disputed *pergunnahs*.

Satiated with victory, courted by Scindiah and feared by the Sikhs, it was in 1798 that George Thomas began to think it time to set himself up as an independent sovereign, and, casting a roving eye on likely and neglected properties, settled finally on the Hurrianah district as in every way suitable. 'In the district called Hurrianah, ninety miles to the north-west of Delhi,' writes Captain Francklin, 'is the country of Mr. George Thomas. It is in shape nearly oval, and extends from sixteen to twenty-four coss (say twenty-four to thirty-six miles) in different directions. It contains

in all about 800 villages.' It grew, still grows no doubt, the finest wheat, the best rice, pulse, chunah, and barley; above all, the richest grass in Asia. So fertile, in fact, was it, that it was known to the natives as the Green Country; whence, it is possible, the Irishman from Tipperary may have chosen it above all others. 'Here,' says Mr. Thomas, 'at Hansi, situate in the centre of the district, standing high on a hill with wells in the fort, I established my capital, rebuilt the walls of the city long since fallen into decay, and repaired the fortifications. As it had been long deserted, at first I found difficulty in procuring inhabitants, but by degrees and gentle treatment I selected between five and six thousand persons, to whom I allowed every lawful indulgence.' There, in Hansi town, he established a mint and coined rupees; cast artillery, made muskets, matchlocks, and powder; not so much with the idea of making himself offensive to his neighbours, as in time establishing a power with which he might one day set out on a grand and general scheme of conquest, for Britain his country's sake. That was always at the back of his mind, it seems, however for the moment bent on harrying other local Rajahs and forcing them to pay up. For 'I wished,' he declares, 'to put myself in a capacity when a favourable opportunity should offer of attempting the conquest of the Punjaub, and aspired to the honour of planting the British standard on the banks of the Attock.' So he told his biographer in 1802, when it was all over and with the remains of his fortune he was on his way down to Calcutta, a beaten man, *non sine gloria*. He was going to build boats at Ferozepoor and take his army down the Sutlej; thence into the Punjaub. And he calculated that, but for Scindiah's wanton interference, he could have done it all in two years.

But it was not to be, and though for three years, from 1798 to 1801, as Rajah of Hurrianah he managed to maintain himself; fighting innumerable battles, against Jeypore, against Bikanere, against Puttialah (important Rajahs, all of them, with considerable armies) and nearly always with complete success; yet the mere fact of his success, and the steady growth and danger of his importance to Sikh and Mahratta, did little for him but ensure the completeness of his final ruin. 'Thus ended,' he writes of his last victorious campaign against Puttialah, immediately before Scindiah had at last made up his mind to attack and destroy him, 'thus ended a campaign of seven months, in which I had been more successful than I could possibly have expected, when I first took

the field, with a force consisting of 5000 men and 36 pieces of cannon. I lost in killed, wounded, and disabled nearly one third of my force; but the enemy lost 5000 persons of all descriptions. I realised near 200,000 rupees, exclusive of the pay of my army, and was to receive an additional 100,000 for the hostages which were delivered up. I explored the country, formed alliances, and in short was dictator in all the countries belonging to the Sikhs south of the river Sutlej.'

Yet before engaging so redoubtable an enemy Scindiah made a last effort to secure him to his interests, urging him to lay aside national animosities and act with Perron, the Frenchman, his Commander-in-Chief, against the Sikhs and Holkar of Indore, their common foes. But how could Thomas possibly accept such a situation—he, a patriot!—when France and England were actually at that moment at war? Perron and he did indeed have a meeting at Behadur Ghur, in September 1801, to talk it all over and see if anything satisfactory could be arranged, when Captain Smith was sent to bring him and his bodyguard of 300 cavalry into the Mahratta camp. It was their first and only meeting, and Thomas says Perron made him very angry by suddenly requiring him to give up his town of Jyjur, offering in place of it 50,000 rupees *per mensem*, on the shameful terms that henceforth he was to be the immediate servant of Scindiah. Nothing could come of such an offer, and hostilities at once began between the unequal forces; Perron with 40,000 infantry, 30,000 cavalry, and 500 guns, and Thomas with 6000 infantry, 1000 cavalry, 1500 Rohillas, and 50 guns.

It could all end only one way, and, notwithstanding prodigies of valour, Thomas found himself before long surrounded by 30,000 men and 110 guns; without supplies, without even grain, with his matchlock men deserting in crowds, and with two only, Birch and Hearsey, left of his European officers. The other, the gallant Hopkins, of whose exploits one always hears most, had his leg broken in a desperate bayonet charge and did not long survive. He appears to have been a sister's sole support; for, says Thomas, 'I sent Miss Hopkins 2000 rupees, and, if not enough, promised to give more out of my own ruined fortunes.' And, of all his army, two hundred men of Hopkins's regiment alone remained. 'They were the only men that stood true to my interests.'

So Thomas rode off to Hansi, there to put up his last stout fight; escaping somehow by night, and riding the 120 miles in

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twenty-four hours on a Persian horse, 'now owned by Sir F. Hamilton, Bart., of Benares.' There were in Hansi only two guns, so Thomas speedily cast and mounted eight more pieces, and, with three hundred Rajpoots in the fort and nine hundred more to defend the city and outposts, still hoped for victory. But the outposts were yielded by treachery, and after the last long fight, in which Robert Skinner so nearly slew him, the indomitable one was driven back into the fort, with his few remaining soldiers clamouring for their pay and in default of it threatening to desert to Perron. 'Considering, therefore,' says Thomas, 'that I had entirely lost my party, and with it the hopes of at present subduing my enemies, the Sikhs, and powers in the French interest; that I had no expectation of succour from any quarter, Luckwah having gone to Joudpore; that if hostilities continued, my resources in money would have failed; in this situation, I agreed to evacuate the fort, and, the necessary arrangements being completed, I stipulated for a battalion of sepoy to escort me to the English frontier, where I arrived in the month of January 1802.'

On December 29, 1801, after dining with Bourquoin and getting tipsy on the 21st, he was allowed to leave Hansi (the battalion of sepoy being at the last denied him) with nothing but his personal possessions. They consisted of a lac and a half of rupees in ready cash, and another lac in shawls, jewels, wearing apparel, and household stuff; say, 25,000*l.* in all. His future was vague; sometimes he spoke of returning to Tipperary, and there eking out a maimed existence on a capital one would otherwise have thought ample for a man who had started life in the country by deserting from the fleet; sometimes the *folie de grandeur* by which he was evidently possessed inspired him to declare that he still wished to give the conquests he no longer owned to his sovereign; 'to serve him the remainder of my days, and this I can only do as a soldier in this part of the world.' As a sailor, he evidently thought his sovereign would no longer care to employ him. Whatever his hopes and schemes, death intervened. On his leisurely way down to Calcutta he died at Berhampore on August 22, 1802, in the military cantonment. As for his personal appearance, he was, says Captain Francklin, over six feet in height, of an intrepid aspect, and a bold and erect carriage; yet somewhat stiff in his movements from so constantly being on horseback. Entirely uneducated, he appears not to have been able to write English, and, indeed, had almost forgotten how to speak it. When applied to by Lord Wellesley,

the Governor-General, for information about the Mahrattas and the Sikhs, he desired permission to deliver what he knew in Persian.

Finally, one wonders whether in the Berhampore burial-ground there be any stone to mark the last resting-place of one of so much valour and achievement; and who it was succeeded to the store of rupees and shawls and jewels he must have left behind him. Did he leave them all to poor Miss Hopkins, or are there Thomases in Tipperary who still might claim them?

WALTER FRITH.

*PRISCILLA OF THE GOOD INTENT.¹**A ROMANCE OF THE GREY FELLS.*

BY HALLIWELL SUTCLIFFE.

CHAPTER X.

REUBEN GAUNT, on the morrow of his holiday at Keta's Well, woke early. A thrush was piping from the lilac-trees outside his window, and the clean smell of the morning came through the casement. He remembered the magic of that evening walk across the fields, and found resolution come easily to him.

His resolution did not fail him when he had breakfasted and ordered the black cob to be saddled. He would ride across to Good Intent, find Cilla's father, and tell his errand.

Yet, while his horse was being saddled, another thought came to him; he was pacing up and down the trim, smooth lawn which, newly mown, stretched to the low wall bordering the high road. The house behind him showed big for a yeoman's, prosperous and well-built, and the garden-spaces about the lawn were trimly kept. It looked a good home for a bride to come to.

'John Hirst will be busy, likely, about the fields,' he thought, 'before I get to Good Intent. Well, then, I'll ride round by the moor, and take my time about it, and trust to finding him nearer the dinner-hour.'

He was not sorry for the respite, as he mounted and turned the cob's head, not down the broad, white highway to Garth, but up the winding track that led him to the moor. This meeting with Cilla's father had to be, but he liked it none the better on that account, and he guessed what sort of welcome he would get.

Gaunt seldom probed into other folks' motives, or his own; and he did not know that there was more behind this round-about journey to Good Intent than was explained either by mistrust of his welcome, or by liking for a long ride up the open

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lands. His project was so dimly formed that, even when he reached the moor, he turned again to the left and not along the right-hand track that led him to Hirst's farm.

He crossed the stream that, just below, ran brown and sparkling into the walled pool used in time of sheep-washing. The track now was only a narrow, lumpy lane, winding between sloping moor above and sharply falling moor beneath, such as was plied in October by the bracken-sledges. Presently it narrowed again into a foot-trail of the sheep; but Gaunt, keeping his eyes on the pitfalls by the way, went forward and up towards the waving line of grey-black which marked the topmost ridge of heath. His cob moved daintily, not liking the rude menace of the ground, until at last they gained the higher lands, went quietly over a level stretch of peat, and halted at the edge of Water Ghyll.

The place had been dear to Gaunt of old, though he had never sought it until now since his return to Garth. In his own heedless, spendthrift way the man cared greatly for this land which had mothered him—this land of pasture-fields, grey walls, and wild, swart over-lordship of the moor.

He looked down upon the steep descent—rocks, and heather-clumps, and tufts of fern new-greening in among the rusty last year's fronds—then glanced across at Clifford's Peel, where its battered remnants stood four-square still to the winds, and prated of old days when the Scotch came raiding sheep and cattle from off the pastured slopes of Garth. It was here that Cilla and he had wandered as boy and girl, here that they had sought great mysteries in among the beetling rocks, the rowans, the deep, thick clumps of ling and cranberry. Water Ghyll had been a forbidden, happy land to them in those days, and they had always reached Garth again with tired feet and glowing cheeks, feeling that they had come safely through hazardous adventures, and trusting soon to tempt again the frowns of peril.

Gaunt thought tenderly of Cilla, as he recalled those far-off scampers. Wisdom in action came harder to him always than tenderness of thought; and by that token more women's tears had been shed on his account than he deserved.

He had won her at long last, he told himself; and this wild trough of the moors, filled all with peat and rocks and silver music of the stream below, seemed to hold some special greeting for him.

As he looked about him, and across the Ghyll, and down into the haunted streamway, his horse began to fidget, then reared suddenly.

'What's amiss, old lad?' laughed Reuben, all but unseated. 'Was in a brown study, I, and thou'st spoilt it all.'

A moment later a woman, climbing the steep face of the Ghyll, showed her head above the ling. Gaunt had been too lost in his own dreams to hear the rattle of loose stones that witnessed to her climb, though his horse had not.

The woman's face was beaten hard by toil and weather, yet she carried it straight on her broad shoulders.

'Ay, ye, Reuben Gaunt?' she said, without surprise.

Reuben, scarce recovered from the first shock of the cob's uprearing, was met by a sharper one. Yet again he laughed, for the crisp of the morning's vigour was in him, as in all things that moved on two legs or on four.

'Give you good-day, Mrs. Mathewson! Scarce looked to see you here in these lone parts.'

'Same to ye! Least looked for, surest found, is Mr. Gaunt of Marshlands.' Her eyes—hazel and big and clear, the one youthful relic that Widow Mathewson possessed—rested quietly on Gaunt's own until he flinched. She was so sure of his frailty; so acquiescent, in a bitter, stifled way, under the trouble he had caused her aforetime, and now was causing her; so sure of her own honesty, and of his lack of it. 'As usual, 'twould seem, I am busy, and ye are idle.'

'Tis a day to be idle on, if ever there was one.'

'May be, for those born to addle no bite and sup. For my part, I've been seeking strayed sheep all across the moor, and not found them yet.'

'Then ye've done no more work than I since sunrise,' said Gaunt.

Widow Mathewson rested both hands on her hips, drew herself yet straighter. Standing there in the sunlight, framed by the swart moor and the dappled sky, she seemed to Gaunt like a carven likeness of her daughter Peggy—of Peggy, grown older, harder, disillusioned altogether. The straight glance that rested on him was Peggy's, too, and the mouth curved into a disdain that despised itself; only the daughter's comely youth was lacking, and the flood of passion in her cheeks.

'Looking for sheep would seem to be my trade in life from cradle-time,' she said. Her voice was grimly playful, lest the tragic note should sound too clearly and beat down the reserve she cherished. 'Ay, I've been all my life looking for sheep and not finding 'em, Reuben Gaunt. A man's love, and bairns, and profit

from farming lean, intaken land—I've sought 'em all in my time, and found 'em go bo-peeping like the ewes I'm following now. Life's like that, till ye've done with it—and may be then we'll find no softer bed to lie on.'

'You're cheery, Mrs. Mathewson,' put in Reuben drily. 'Nice neighbour-body to fall in with, when a man's spirits are running high.'

'Oh, I've done with cheeriness—done with over-much grief, too, by that token. Sometimes, when I look at ye, Reuben Gaunt, a touch of the old fire comes to me, and I long to throttle ye, stark where ye stand. Then I laugh to myself, knowing I'd fail at the job, somehow, though I brought all the will in the world to it. Peggy will have to thole her misery, as I did mine at her age; and, by that token, I'm keeping ye from riding out to see her.'

Gaunt knew at last the hidden motive for his journey. He had not confessed it to himself; but this woman, with the hard clear eyes and clear hard insight into life, had found the truth for him.

'I'm riding in the contrary direction, as it chances,' he said.

'Ah, that proves the matter. There's other birds like ye, prettyish and small of build, that fly zig-zag to their nests.'

Gaunt was nettled in earnest now. 'As you want a plain tale, you shall have it,' he said quietly. 'I'm going to marry John Hirst's daughter.'

Widow Mathewson knew no surprises nowadays; she had outlived them. 'Guessed as much yester-night,' she said, speaking only half the truth for once, like Reuben himself. Yet it was only the name of her daughter's rival that she had lacked. 'Peggy went to bed with tears in her een, and in the middle of the night she wakened me with her sobbing in the next-door room. Queer that such as ye can keep such as Peggy wetting blankets with her tears; but I did the same in my time for as poor a dandy-tuft of a man as ye.'

'We are good friends, seemingly,' said Gaunt impatiently.

'Ay, close as bee and flower, Reuben Gaunt. Ride down to Peggy—she's throng with churning—and tell her the same lies that I hearkened to when I was ripe and young. God plants the like garden for all women, I take it, with the like apples in it; and, whether the man be half a man or a tenth part, 'tis all one. Reuben Gaunt,' she broke off, with the passion she had denied not long ago, 'why did ye keep your saddle just now when I frightened that horse of yours? There's a sharp rock on either hand of ye,

and two or three in front ; whichever way your horse had thrown ye, ye'd not have lighted soft—and it might have been on your head.'

'I learned young to keep the saddle, though I'm loth to dis-appoint you, Mrs. Mathewson,' said Gaunt, recovering his air of unconcern.

'Should have been glad, I, to see ye with your head smashed in,' went on the other dispassionately ; 'glad, too, to think 'twas I that started your horse. But it was not like to be ; for ye always had the luck. Luck doesn't run in my family, and never did.'

There was a silence between them, as they faced each other, the only human folk in this lonely stretch of heath. In a place more busy, with others near at hand to temper the reality of what he saw in the woman's face, of what he heard in her voice, Reuben Gaunt might have carried the matter off with more success ; but they were alone, with the rugged moor about them.

The moor, like Peggy's mother, had no illusions, no pretty mind-play confusing right and wrong. The moor's poetry was concerned with truth—budding of the heather, out-breaking of the green stems of the bilberry into the brave of their scarlet leafing-time, egg-laying of plover, grouse, and curlew—and, like a happy, busy wife, the moor could find no leisure, and wanted none, for dalliance. Her poetry was circumstanced about by dawn and dusk, by pageantry of windy skies, by growth of suckling young. She had no time for lies, although—her one falling away from true consistency—she loved, too, the crafty stoats, the weasels, and the foxes, that harboured in her breast and stole out at unawares to rob the upland broods.

Gaunt was alone with the moor. He was alone, too, with Widow Mathewson, who had lived so long on the rough edge of the wilderness that she had grown to its own likeness. He saw, during that time of silence, his past life stretching behind him like a miry, ill-found road. He knew himself dishonest, though he tried to find again his old, easy outlook upon life. A naked man, facing the naked truth, was Reuben Gaunt this once ; and there was no Cilla here, sitting beside him as they travelled down the road to Garth and bringing to him thoughts of tranquil betterment.

'I'll be going up the moor,' he said at last, fumbling with the reins.

'Ay, I would. Then turn to the right, and down to the right again—ye know your way to Peggy.'

There was something in the woman's bitter jest that struck deeper than any curse would have done. Gaunt looked over his shoulder once, as he rode up the slope, and saw her standing, at once the victim of destiny and its symbol; and the breeze felt chilly to him on the sudden, as if there were snow behind it.

'Twas she that put the notion into my head,' he thought. 'Well, then, I'll ride to Ghyll, as she bids me, and I'll see Peggy for the last time. We should part friends, and last night's parting was no friendly one.'

He came to the marshy flats on the moor-top where the stream had birth that ran through Water Ghyll. Wide to the north and south, wide to the east and west, swept the hills and moors and fields; here a broken ridge, and there a soft-descending, rolling spur of hills, showed like a rude girdle to the comely Vale of Garth. Beneath his horse's feet the grouse got up and whirled, crying, crying over the desolate land; and the sky seemed near, as if a man, by reaching up, could touch it almost.

In amongst the marshes Gaunt saw the sheep which Widow Mathewson was seeking. They were feeding on the rich butter-grass that grew in treacherous places, and he knew them by the branded *M*, red-painted on their fleeces. Good-naturedly he turned shepherd for awhile, drew round them—the cob showing frankly his distaste for the wet ground—and, by dint of whistling, as if he had a farm-dog with him, and by skill of horsemanship, he gathered the ewes into a flock before him. And so he rode down the moor again, forgetting his mistrust of Widow Mathewson in the sly pleasure of succouring her at need.

She was standing where he left her, looking up the moor. Indeed, the big heath held only one figure and one thought for her; strong and weak herself, she loved the weakness and the strength of her daughter, the one link in her life that no storm had been powerful to break. She was past the stress of youth; but she remembered, and in her heart she was praying—she, who never went to kirk or chapel—that Reuben Gaunt might die.

Gaunt whistled low and clear again, and sent down the sheep—a huddled, scampering flock—toward the woman. He was no fool in matters of the farm, but at usual times he was too indolent to use his gifts in that direction.

'Coals of fire!' he shouted, putting a hand to his mouth to carry the sound up-wind. 'Here are your sheep—gather them in and drive 'em home, Widow.'

'Like him,' said Mrs. Mathewson, with patient wonder. 'Kills the heart in a woman one minute, and the next goes out of his home-bee road to do her a good turn. Would God I knew what sort o' clay this Reuben Gaunt is made of!'

She gathered her flock together, and started to drive them home; but Gaunt was riding straight across the moor, and riding fast, for Ghyll.

It was easy, seeing the farm to-day, with the mellow spring-light dwarfed and sundered by its blackened walls—it was easy to understand the gospel in which Widow Mathewson and her daughter had been reared. It was chary of spring, this farm; it had received more kicks than halfpence from the weather; it looked askance at gifts o' grace, and would not listen to the larks on this blithe morning. The black and forthright walls seemed to be asking how soon this fairy-game of spring would cease, and winter growl and batter at its casements once again.

Peggy had just finished churning, when she heard the sound of horse-hoofs. She stood and listened, and there was expectation in every line of her strong figure—and in her face a wild self-pity and derision.

'So you've come?' was her greeting, as Gaunt stepped inside the dairy, after slipping the cob's bridle about the top-bar of the outer gate. 'Knew you would, soon or late—but 'tis full soon, Reuben, seeing that only last night—'

'I want us to part friends. That's why I'm here,' broke in the other, tapping his riding-breeches restlessly with his crop.

The girl laughed. Gaunt had never heard disaster so assured in any voice. It was as if the farmstead, and the weather it had seen, and the tumults that had scarred its walls, took human shape and utterance.

'That's how ye want us to part?' she said. 'Will ye be a fool to the end, Reuben Gaunt, or are ye thinking life's a game for bairns to sport with? Ride back through the ling to lile Miss Good Intent, and tell her I've returned ye with all the will in the world. Tell her that lasses catch ye, like the plague, and lose what little looks they've got through fretting for your tom-fool ways. Tell her——'

She broke down suddenly, for the strain of the past night, of the day's forced labour at the churn, had told on her. She had no tears left; but her eyes were full of a soft mist, such as a warm gloaming draws from Garth Valley in the spring. Peggy was

beautiful to-day ; her tragedy was that of the ages, but her pathos was her own, single and direct in its appeal.

The cool, whitewashed dairy framed her ; the warm, rich smell of milk and butter was about her.

‘Peggy,’ said Reuben Gaunt, ‘God knows ’tis hard to part from ye.’

‘Ay, and God knows that Peggy Mathewson knows your lies—knows them within and without—as she knows her own face—her face, Reuben, that was bonnie enough to catch ye, but not bonnie enough to hold ye afterwards. See ye, lad, ye’re bent on killing me one way or another. Why not take some handy stave and do it now ? Better soon than late, Reuben, if a body’s got to die.’

‘I’m marrying Priscilla of the Good Intent,’ said Gaunt doggedly.

‘Oh, I know so much since yestere’en. D’ye think to give her happiness, Reuben ? I could never tell, myself, what was in your mind, or out of it, at any moment.’

‘Come for a walk in the fields, Peggy,’ he said, after a restless silence.

‘Can as well talk here, and thank ye. As I was saying, ye puzzle me. A bit like thunder-weather, ye—the wind blows one way and the clouds drive forrard t’ other way. Reuben, *do* ye think to make a happy wife of Miss Good Intent ?’

It was characteristic of this upland lass that she bore no malice toward Cilla. Her quarrel was with Reuben here, with her own weakness, with life itself ; Priscilla was a harmless and unmeaning bit of flesh to her, counting for little either way, save that she chanced to be the one to come between herself and Gaunt.

‘I’m going to make her happy—yes. May a man never begin the good life, Peggy ?’

‘Ay,’ answered the other quietly. ‘A *man* may always—but I cannot see ye doing it, Reuben, somehow.’

‘I had so much to tell you,’ he said, after another silence. ‘I wanted—’

‘Oh, I dare say, Reuben. Wanted to patch up the road ye’ve fouled behind ye, afore taking to the smooth road ready-made in front ? Eh, but you must be a fool to the marrow, after all ! Dress all in your good clothes, if it pleases ye, and put on a Sabbath face for other folk—but, for mercy’s sake, don’t come to Peggy Mathewson after that fashion. Going to lead the good life, are ye ? Well, what of me ?’

There was no soft wind blowing here at Ghyll Farm, as it had blown last night all down Garth Valley. For the second time this morning Gaunt saw the simple, candid picture of himself.

'You were crying last night, Peggy. I looked for a softer welcome,' he said, blurting out his thoughts as a child might have done.

'Oh, and was I? Who told ye that?'

'I fell in with Mrs. Mathewson as I rode up here. Besides, I can see it in your eyes.'

'Has she found the sheep?' said Peggy, with desperate pretence to ward off the graver issue.

'I found them for her. Say, Peggy, what were you crying for?'

Peggy thought of the heart-break that had been her mate last night. 'Crying for a lad ye'll never know, Reuben,' she answered.

He was quiet for awhile. Then suddenly his eyes caught fire at hers. 'Oh, come away to the fields,' he said. 'We could aye talk better out o' doors, Peggy.'

An hour later Mrs. Mathewson returned, driving her sheep, and found Gaunt's horse tethered to the gateway. The house was empty.

'I'll thole a lot,' she muttered, 'but I'm no way going to let Reuben Gaunt stable his horse in my paddock while he goes knocking nails in Peggy's coffin.'

She unfastened the cob's bridle, opened the gate, and sent him up into the moor. But first she took the bit from his mouth, and laid it with the reins upon the ground; for she had no wish to let the beast break his knees through getting the reins across his legs. The horse, glad of his freedom, turned his head once or twice in search of Reuben, then galloped off. And Widow Mathewson, who seldom smiled, laughed grimly as she saw him breast the moortop, then disappear.

'Gaunt has galloped as free in his time,' she thought. 'Let him find his horse if he can, and catch it.'

CHAPTER XI.

PRISCILLA OF THE GOOD INTENT had been restless when she bade good-night to David the Smith and provoked from him a discourteous farewell. She was more restless still when the birds awoke her soon after dawn of the next day and would not let her get to sleep again. So she got up, and lingered often at the open window, listening to the bird-calls and all the fret of newly wakened life about the fields, while she washed, and dressed herself, and went through the simple rites that accompanied the beginning of the day in Garth.

She wondered if Reuben would like the blue print gown better than the lilac one. Her head a little on one side, a shy, quick splash of colour in her cheeks, she looked from one dress to the other, and could not make her choice. Cilla of the Good Intent was a changed lassie since that glammed walk across the fields with Reuben; wearing-gear had troubled her little until yesterday, and she had chosen her gowns by instinct, without conscious thought about the matter.

'I was wearing the lilac one when he liked me first,' she said, with a low, happy laugh. 'Perhaps, when he comes to-day, he will like to see me wearing it.'

Beyond the open window, where the fields sloped in green hollows to the edge of Garth village, the birds could not be quiet. Ousel-cocks were calling to their mates. Thrustles were whistling, piping, singing, the full flood of their melody let loose; and, like practised singers, they could afford to play strange antics with their voices. Up and down the scale the speckled songsters ran; and now they whistled 'come out'; and again they called, with pretence of great sobriety, 'There's love a-waiting, love's a-waiting; love and his life lass.' On the roof-tops starlings cheeped, until they could bear the thrushes' rivalry no longer, and began to mimic them in cracked and foolish notes.

First love was harbouring with Priscilla. She was in tune with the birds and the leafing land, and she had to put a hand on the bosom of her lilac gown, because the gladness of the day went almost beyond bearing.

For once, she was earlier abroad than her father, who had allowed himself another hour of bed after yesterday's hardship in the fields. Before it was time to set his breakfast on the board

and pour out his tea for him, she had done a score of little things about the house, and in the dairy, and in the croft above the house where the fowls were up betimes.

'Am going up the fields, father,' she said, as she cleared the table after breakfast. Betty, the farm-maid, was 'throng with washing,' and not able any way to help.

'Right, lile lass ! Maids must saunter time and time i' spring. Wholesome, too, I say—and I warrant ye've your day's work trimly in your hands already.'

'Was down an hour before you, father,' she put in playfully.

'Ay, old bones are lazy bones. Shame on me, Cilla, lass, to break my fast at half after seven in the morning. Ye'll not tell David the Smith ?' he added, with the boisterous slyness that his daughter understood so well.

'I'm not likely to,' she said demurely, and went upstairs to doff her apron and to don a hat.

Here, again, the earlier trouble beset her. What head-gear should she choose ? To be sure, she did not look to meet Reuben in the fields ; but he might ride in for a talk with her father—might be in the croft among the hens and turkeys, or in the paddock, or in the house-place when she returned. She wanted Reuben to approve her when they met.

She made her choice at last, and yeoman Hirst, just going out to see that his men were at their work, turned for a look at her as she came down the stair.

'Bless me, ye grow bonnier, Cilla !' he cried, with a muffled roar of true affection. 'Tuts ! 'Twill be a blithe lad that tempts ye to share house with him.'

Cilla answered nothing, but nodded gravely at Yeoman Hirst and went out by the door that opened on the garden. Up the young, green pastures she went, carrying first love with her. All things to-day were big with self-importance ; and she, who had thought but little of herself till now, wondered if she would be always fair in Reuben's eyes. She trusted so ; for Gaunt seemed worth the best that she could bring him.

One deep regret she had, to temper the new gladness. She was holding a secret from her father, and the knowledge, just as it had done last night, brought a sense of shame to her from time to time. In the background, too, was another shadow—that of David the Smith, with his abiding care for her. But the day was not one for shadow except such as the sun and the breeze between them chased

across the pastures. The world would not let Priscilla be out of mood with it; the reek of the drying grass, on which late dew-drops lingered still, the clamour of the birds, the restless pushing up toward the light of winter's hidden shoots—all was a conspiracy against repinings or backward glances.

By the mossy lane past Brow-Top Ings she went, and wild-strawberry blooms, white and starry, peeped out at her from hidden nooks. Sometimes loitering, sometimes moving quickly, as if her thoughts outpaced her, she found the highest fields at last and saw the dark face of the moor above her. Not caring where she went, and obeying any whim, she climbed a fence or two and was free of the open heath. Here, too, spring's advance was plainly marked, though it needs a subtler study to perceive it here than in the lower lands.

Priscilla had no thought of foreign countries now. Garth, whose face she knew—Garth, the familiar and well-tried—was full of mysteries, delights, surprises. Could she have ever thought, she wondered, that Reuben Gaunt had painted fairer lands for her than this in which she lived?

She lifted her head on the sudden, hearing a pad of hoofs across the peaty ground. Gaunt's horse, weary of his freedom already and finding himself lost on the edge of an alien moor, was searching for his master. Cilla was the first human being he had seen since Widow Mathewson loosed his bridle and sent him wide across the heath; so now he came, with mincing steps across the broken ground, and laid his muzzle in her hand, and asked for guidance.

Cilla knew the horse; it was the best in Garth, indeed, and known to folk less interested than she in Reuben. Out from the blue sky and the sunshine fear came suddenly to Priscilla of the Good Intent. Apart from love of his master, there is always something of portent and foreboding when a riderless horse comes fawning at one's hand.

'Where is the master?' cried Priscilla, soothing his muzzle with a hand that trembled.

The cob tossed his head. That was the question he had brought to Cilla, trusting that in her wisdom she would give him a plain answer. She had none, it seemed, and presently, growing restless again, he shook his head free and cantered off.

Cilla watched him take wide circuits, slacken to a trot, then to a walk. He was snuffing the ground like a hound on trail, and

last of all he seemed to find a clue, for he turned down the moor along a narrow track, found the gate open at the bottom and trotted out of sight. The girl turned, and wandered as aimlessly about the moor as the horse had done; she was sure that Reuben was lying somewhere in the heather, thrown and badly hurt.

What had she said to her father not long ago? That snow might follow all this April weather. And now she recalled the words, recalled the cold sense of foreboding that had accompanied them.

Tired and out of breath, she halted to look about her. Again, like the horse, she sought for help—sought dumbly for it—when her own instincts were at fault.

‘Good-day to ye now. Te-he! Rare weather for the time o’ year,’ came a voice at her elbow.

‘Why, Billy, Billy, you startled me!’

‘Wouldn’t do that—nay, not for a pipeful o’ baccy,’ said Billy the Fool. ‘’Tis this way, as a body’s body might strive to put that same into plainish speech. I’d been peeping into a nest here, and a lile nest there, right up the pastures; and Fool Billy got to the moor, he did, and fancied he’d see if the peewits were a-laying on yond ancient ground o’ theirs up by Butter-grass Bogs. Then I sees ye—and, durn th’ odd button that’s left on my coat, Miss Priscilla, if I thought twice again o’ the peewits.’

Billy was always the courtier with Miss Good Intent; but she was too tired, too anxious, to give him more than a wan smile.

‘Help me to find Mr. Gaunt,’ she said. ‘His horse came to me just now, Billy, with no one in the saddle. He’s lying somewhere on the moor, and I cannot find him. You’re quick to find missing folk, they say, when they’re four-footed—well, find Mr. Gaunt for me, Billy the Fool.’

Cilla did not know her own voice; it was so eager, so impetuous. And she relied—and knew it, she who had been self-dependent until now—upon Billy the Fool.

The lad’s face altered. Across the plump and childish flesh stray wrinkles crept, as circles widen on a pool when a stone is thrown into its waters. But Cilla, though she looked at him with frank, steadfast gaze, could not guess what was passing through his mind. So it would be with Billy the Fool until the mould lay heavy on his coffin; a love greater than Yeoman Hirst’s he had for Cilla, a love greater than David the Smith’s; but his thoughts were prisoned up in an unwieldy bulk of flesh, and to the end he would

be Billy the Fool, Billy the Well-Beloved, just as the moor about Cilla and himself to-day would always be the moor, telling her secrets to none.

'Well, now,' said Billy patiently, 'I can find Mr. Reuben Gaunt for ye.'

'Is he—is he hurt?'

'Sound as ye or me. Hurt? Not the sort o' man, he, to get into hurt. Slips through and about matters that might hurt him, like a snod trout when ye're a-tickling of his underward parts in Eller Beck.'

Cilla did not heed the lad's veiled dislike of Gaunt. She was too glad to know that he was safe to care for aught else.

'Tell me where to find him,' she said impatiently.

'I'll take ye straight to where he is,' answered Billy promptly, and set off down the slope.

He led her into the fields below, then to a little dingle, all wooded in with thorns and slim, low hazel-shrubs. Not a word would he speak, though Priscilla asked him many questions by the way.

Gaunt might be safe; but to the girl there was something uncanny in the natural's silence. The wrinkles were graven deeper now in his face, and Cilla, glancing at him now and then, was awed by the look—fixed, inscrutable—in the lad's eyes.

'Chanced on him through coming to see a blackbird's nest o' mine,' he said at last, when they were nearing the dingle. 'Had just pushed the twigs from together, and peered in, to find the hen-bird off her nest—and I happened, as Billy the Fool might say, to look beyond that same old tree o' thorn, and down below I saw—'

'Yes?' asked the girl, fretting under all this needless mystery.

'What I'll show ye, if so Mr. Reuben Gaunt be still there or thereabouts. Now, step ye pratly, Miss Priscilla, and keep your voice as low as any sparrow-chirp; for the mother-bird may well be sitting again, and 'tis ill disturbing mated folk.'

Whether it were guile or instinct on Billy's part, none would ever know. He might have taken Cilla to twenty equal vantage-grounds from which to look into the hollow; but he made for the thorn bush, saw the bright eyes of the bird watching him, took infinite pains to part the branches a little to the right without disturbing her, then turned to Cilla.

The girl, humouring what she fancied now must be some delusion of the lad's, crept under his outstretched arm and looked down. A strip of broken turf, starred with primroses, sloped to the bubbling

stream, and at the water's edge, Peggy was sitting with Gaunt's arm about her waist.

Priscilla gave no cry. The stream, the two figures sitting by its rim, quivered and rocked, then circled round about her. The primroses made thin, waving lines of yellow across this evil, daytime vision. Then all was clear again—mercilessly clear—and Gaunt's head was near to Peggy Mathewson's, as last night it had been near to Cilla's.

Priscilla of the Good Intent stepped back. She was pale, but willowy and upright still; out of the generations of the Hirsts that had fathered her, help came to her in the hour of need.

She walked slowly back into the field, Billy the Fool following close behind her. Whatever the natural had hoped to do by this exploit, it was plain that, to his own thinking, he had failed. He kept trying to find words, and, finding none, reached out his hands toward Priscilla, with a gesture piteous and helpless.

'Billy, I am troubled,' said Cilla, halting suddenly. 'No, you are not to come with me this once! I am troubled—and, Billy, I must be alone.'

Grave and sweet her voice was, sweet and grave her consideration for the poor fool's feelings when she had need to think only of her own.

The natural watched her cross the pastures; then his face twitched, and the lines came out on it afresh; and, after that, he threw himself on the ground and dug his fingers deep into the turf and cried like a three-year babe. Afterwards he sat up, his face vacant as of old.

'Seems as if Billy the Fool were shut up tight in a prison,' he muttered. 'Wears what ye might call a band of iron all round his headpiece, like, and he thinks, and he thinks, and naught comes on 't. Miss Good Intent's going to cry—and 'tis Fool Billy made her.'

Down yonder in the little dingle, Gaunt and Peggy Mathewson were saying good-bye. For an hour they had sat by the stream, helpless in each other's hands, as they had always been. Gaunt had once more told her frankly—he had found courage for that—that at all hazards he meant to wed Priscilla.

'Suppose I went and told her what ye'd said to me, and what ye'd looked at me, and all the sorry tale?' cried Peggy, roused from her desperate acquiescence in the gospel that what would be, would be. 'Would you fare well, Reuben, with lile Miss Good Intent?'

'Well or ill, I should let you go with your tale. I'll not stand between Priscilla and the truth, if she must have it but—I'll not tell her it myself.'

'There again, you're a puzzle, just a puzzle,' she said, with a quick return to her old manner. 'Spoke like a man just then, ye. Other times ye'll be half a man, or none at all. I've asked ye fifty times, Reuben, but could find myself no nearer an answer yet—what was left out of ye at birth?'

'Seems power to guide myself was left out of me,' he answered sharply. 'Listen to me, Peggy! I've nothing much behind me to boast of—but I love Hirst's lile lass.'

'Ay, so ye said,' put in the other drily. 'It scarce helps me, Reuben, to hear it twice. For there's my own life, as it happens, as well as yours to reckon with.'

Gaunt felt like a man whose feet are caught by the bog. The clean, dry land was near to him; but his feet were chained, and it was hard to pluck them out.

As for Peggy, she was ready to drift into any mood, and past days returned to her with sudden clearness.

'Do ye mind the day we went to Lingall Fair? 'Twas years ago, Reuben, but I mind it still. You bought a ring off a pedlar, and you set it on my finger. Lord, how it all comes back!' she broke off, looking softly at him, so that her likeness to her mother was altogether lost. 'There was a young moon over the fell-top, and folk were dancing on the green; and you put the ring on my finger, and my heart went all soft and shameless. Reuben, you told me——'

'Told you we were wedded; and we laughed. Ay, I remember, Peggy!'

And so they fell to quiet talk of bygone times. Peggy wondered at her weakness, and Gaunt could not fathom the meaning of his newly-wakened liking to be with this lass, when he should have been at Good Intent.

It was then that Billy the Fool guided Cilla to the thorn-bush where the mother-blackbird sat upon her nest; but neither Gaunt nor Peggy saw the stricken face that watched them for a moment between the twigs, then disappeared.

'Fine-weather days don't last, somehow,' went on the girl. 'We thought the world held no two folk, Reuben, save ye and me? Well, we were fools for our pains.'

'They're good to look back on now and then, all the same, those days.'

'Oh, where's the use in your looking-back? You feel no warmer in winter-time by thinking of last summer's heat. *Good to look back on?* 'Tis easy for ye to talk, Reuben!'

Gaunt got to his feet, and helped her up. 'Time we were moving, Peggy,' he said curtly—for he was fearing the girl's despair and tenderness. 'Yond horse of mine will be tearing the reins to bits, for I've kept him longer tied to a gate-post than he ever was before.'

'So 'tis good-bye?' she said, moving beside him up the stream.

'Ay, for it must be. Byegones are byegones, Peggy.'

'True—if ye let 'em be. Never fear, fool Reuben! I'm as proud as Miss Good Intent, or may be more so, and I'll not trouble ye. Begin with your good life, lad, and see if ye can carry it! And for all reward I'll ask to see Miss Priscilla's face when a year's gone by and the first bairn has come.'

Reuben winced. None in Garth would have given him credit for it; but, weak of purpose as he was, his love for Cilla touched clean, wholesome thoughts that had been stifled long ago. He resented Peggy's easy speech touching his marriage and what might, or might not, come afterwards. The girl knew what was passing in his mind, and laughed—not carelessly, but with the sadness that was rooted deep in all her moods.

'Sorry to hurt ye, Reuben,' she said. 'You're a delicate sort o' plant, and need a wall 'twixt ye and the wind.'

They were silent until Intake Farm was well in sight. Peggy halted in the dip of the fields where the ragged thorn-trees grew. She looked long and hard at Gaunt, and again there was a strange beauty in her face.

'Was going to ask ye for a last kiss, but I'm past that, Reuben. Lad, I wonder will ye ever know the kisses we might have had! I think ye'll waken sometimes in the night, and hunger for what's past your getting any longer. Fratch as we may, we were made each for the other, if your een were open wide enough to see it.'

'Peggy, lass,' he began, moving nearer to her.

'Nay, Reuben! Over and done with, like a last year's nest. Yond's your way; I'm going wide into the moor, to cool a touch of some daff fever that's come over me.'

Irresolute, and glancing backward often, Reuben went up toward Ghyll Farm. Life, that had seemed so plain last night upon the Garth highroad, was tangled now. The fierce, low passion of the girl—her certainty of heart-break, with little complaining—

a shrewd guess that she was right in saying he would wake at night and think of her—these were out of keeping with the primrose lanes of yesterday.

'Tis hard to go straight,' said Gaunt at last, with a shrug of his shoulders, as he reached the paddock of Ghyll Farm.

No horse was tethered to the gate ; but over the top bar leaned Widow Mathewson, her brown arms naked to the sunlight and a look of grim derision on her face.

'Seeking a horse, Mr. Gaunt ? ' she asked, with studied courtesy.

'Yes, I tethered him to the gate here.'

'Oh, 'twill be the one I loosened an hour or so agone. Found him here, when I came from driving sheep across the moorland ; and I hadn't a use for him myself.'

'Thank you,' said Reuben, falling in with the widow's own quiet tone. 'Sensible thing, Mrs. Mathewson, to loose a cob whenever ye find him tied to a gate-post by the bridle.'

'So I thought myself—and, by that token, I slipped the bridle from his mouth and laid it under the wall here. Will ye take it with ye, Mr. Gaunt, or shall Peggy bring it over to Marshlands ? We're simple, and ye're reckoning to be one o' the gentry-born nowadays ; so I fancy ye'd think it ill-demeaned ye, like, to go carrying a horse's bridle in your hands.'

Gaunt took the bridle, keeping his temper as best he could. Quiet or stormy, Widow Mathewson always cut like hail against his face.

'Perhaps you'll tell me where the cob went, the last you saw of him ? '

'Up the moor, and seemed to relish his liberty. He may be at Lingall by this time—though I doubt the marshes on that side o' the heather would stop him—or happen he's taken t' other road, and got to Keta's Well—or—'

'Then where the devil am I to look for him ? ' snapped Reuben.

'God knows—which, as I've seen life, means always that human folk can't guess. Where are Peggy's wits, Mr. Gaunt ? God knows again—for bless me if her mother does.'

Reuben went off, the bridle dangling from his arm ; and Widow Mathewson turned across the paddock.

'Reckon he'll have a longish walk before him, any way,' she said. 'Beggars don't ride most times—and neither does Reuben Gaunt to-day.'

Gaunt himself abandoned all thought of seeking the cob. It

would reach home, or he would hear of its whereabouts to-morrow. Meanwhile, he was glad of this further respite from his talk with Yeoman Hirst.

'It would be too late, by the time I walked to Good Intent,' he thought. 'I'll ride up about supper-time, and catch John Hirst in his ripe, evening humour.'

When he reached home, his cob was waiting for him on his own lawn. It had jumped the round, grey wall that guarded the highroad, and now, after a morning's tribulation, was seeking for grass-stalks on the shaven lawn.

Horses and dogs were no harsh judges of Reuben Gaunt; and now, as the cob came whinnying to him, he said to himself with a laugh that it was the first friendly welcome he had had since riding up to Ghyll.

Priscilla, meanwhile, had gone across the fields, carrying first disillusionment now in place of first love—the love that she had buried yonder in the wooded dingle. She felt no anger toward Reuben; it was as if she had seen him die suddenly and without warning, had seen him pass into a dim land of which she had no ken; and the stupor of her grief for him was on her.

For herself, the silver thread was loosened that had bound her to the spring. Sunlight and shadow on the pastures, the rising skynote of the lark, the fretting of the curlews and the plover; she saw and heard them, but could no longer understand their beauty. Between herself and life there was a dead, grey wall; and cowslips nodded vainly to her as she passed, and, when the lambs came frisking toward her, she did not heed them.

She was glad, on reaching Good Intent, to find that her father had finished his early dinner and was out in the fields. Mechanically she set about her duties, forgetting to take food herself; and, like David the Smith, she found a certain ease, a certain deadening of pain, in moving forward with her work. When Hirst came in about half after four, she was pale, and her eyes were listless, but she was mistress of herself and ready with a greeting.

'Thou'st over-tired thyself, lile lass,' said the farmer, patting her shoulder as he crossed to the big hearth-chair. 'Eh, well! Maids will roam i' the spring, and forget their victuals; and may be, after all, it does them no great harm.'

A gleam of comfort came to Cilla. She had no secret now from this big-voiced, big-hearted father, who looked for each passing change across her face as a lover might have done. Sad she

might be, but she could look at Yeoman Hirst again and feel no shame.

'The spring tires one, father,' she answered quietly.

'Should think it did!' cried the other, settling himself with a pleasant uproar into his chair. 'Blanketed in snow one week, and blanketed the next in sunshine. Ne'er heed, lassie; I'm no way for quarrelling myself with all this warmth that's bringing up the clover fair like a fairy's trick. Cilla, there's David the Smith coming at five of the clock to help wi' yond durned turkey-pen. I'm dry, lass, and I won't deny a measure of ale would hearten up my innards. Let it be the light ale, though; light ale, light hearts, they say in Garth—and, bless me, ye need a lightish heart and a clearish head when it comes to netting off a pen.'

David the Smith, punctual to five—by his favourite clock, the sun—was waiting in the croft when Hirst came out.

'Evening, David!'

'Evening, farmer! And as likely a one as we'll see this side o' Michaelmas.'

'Ay—oh, ay. Wind a thought shrewder than it was, but nought to matter.'

David pointed to the upper corner of the croft. 'Thought ye told me all my stakes were lying where I laid 'em? Why, they're tight in their places, farmer, and the skirting-boards all nailed trim and level.'

The other scratched his shaven chin and laughed. 'Between you and me, David,' he said, lowering his voice to a confidential bellow, 'I didn't speak quite the truth. Can drive a stake as true as any man, and can nail the boards on trim enough; but, when it comes to netting, my men and me are done, and 'twas that we wanted ye for to-day. It all comes o' listening to new-fangled notions.'

'Well, now, as for that, I know naught o' netting myself,' said David, glancing at the plump, white rolls of wire. 'Always fenced the run with boarding, I. Who brought the notion into Garth?'

'Reuben Gaunt, I fancy; though, if I'd known at first that the notion came from that quarter, there's never a yard o' netting would have come into my lile croft. Well, we've got the job on hand, David, and here my two men are, and we'd best get agate with it, liking it or no.'

The farm-hands nodded cheerily to David. 'Rum goings on i' Garth,' said one. 'Would as soon handle a bunch o' thorn-prickles

as yond lump o' wire. But Farmer Hirst knows best—oh, ay, he's for knowing what is best.'

'And, if he doesn't, ye've got to think so,' put in the farmer drily. 'Here, lads, buckle to.'

The men handled the wire gingerly at first, then with the carelessness begotten of a great despair. The uprights—seven feet high—were standing like so many fingers, pointing to the dappled sky; and, because the ground rose sharply toward the further limit of the pen, the upper poles looked down upon their neighbours in the valley.

'We'll begin on the level, like,' said Hirst, setting a box of nails on the turf at his feet, and holding his hammer, so David said, 'as if he were going to fell a bullock.'

The beginning of the work was simple. The three unrolled the wire and got one end of it into its place, while Hirst nailed it fast against the upright. Then they stretched it to the next upright, and so went forward blithely.

'There's naught so much to be feared, after all,' cried John Hirst, his voice rousing a sentry-rook that was watching them from the elm-tree in the corner.

'Naught, save sore hands,' assented David. 'Though I'll own, farmer, I never met stuff so maidish, and so crinkly-like to handle, as this same netting. Now, stretch it, lads! There, 'tis all in place for ye, farmer.'

They finished netting the low end of the pen, and turned the corner; but soon the level of the ground grew higher, and, though the poles about them were stationed true in height, the netting would go lower and lower, till it threatened to be merged altogether in the rising ground above. They twisted it, and pulled it out of shape, and talked to it as if it were a bairn to be coaxed into a good temper. Naught served; the upper line of the wire descended constantly, and the look of this late-built turkey-pen was a thing for the soberest man to laugh at.

John Hirst threw down his hammer at last, and kicked the box of nails against the wall, and stood off from his handiwork and looked at it.

'I'm not one to swear at any time,' he said, slowly, 'but *dang* yond netting. Dang Reuben Gaunt, moreover, who brought new-fangled notions into Garth.'

The four men retreated to the wall, and sat thereon, glowering at the turkey-pen.

'Daren't trust myself with speech, I,' said David the Smith. 'Should say terrible things o' yond wire-stuff, once I gave leave to my tongue.'

'I tell ye what,' said Hirst—his farm-men laughed to see his temper go by the board for once—'I tell ye what, David. We'll rive the whole lot down, and build up the pen with good, honest lathes like your father did, and mine. And if any man speaks o' wire-netting in my hearing for a year to come—why, I'll ding him on the lugs.'

'Garth's right, after all,' murmured one farm-man to the other behind his hand. 'Them turkeys will be penned afore, or a lile while after, the next breeding-time.'

'What's that ye're saying?' roared Hirst, turning on the whispering pair.

'Nay, naught—just naught at all.'

'Well, ye'd better not say it just now, all the same. David, I fair hate to be beaten by a job! Let's rive it down, and bundle it into a corner, and have done wi' it. Garth notions will be good enough for me in future, I warrant ye.'

David, too, was nettled, for it was seldom he went wrong in anything concerned with handicraft. 'Comes o' bringing foreign truck into Garth Valley,' he growled. 'Why ye and me should take to handling such outlandish stuff at our time o' life, farmer, is more than I can tell.'

The gate of the croft was opened quietly, and Billy the Fool sauntered idly towards them. The natural gave no hint, in look or bearing, of the woeful trouble he had caused himself and Cilla up yonder on the brink of the wooded hollow.

'Now, good day, misters all!' was his greeting, as he slouched up, his hands thrust listlessly into the pockets of his ancient trousers. 'Tis what Billy the Fool would call a fine evening for the time o' year; and yet there's somewhat cold, and wet, and sharp, blowing up from Easterby Hill.'

'Tuts!' said Yeoman Hirst. 'Ye're as wise as a fox when it's scenting a hen-house, Billy; but this weather is nailed to the sky, I tell ye, and won't shift for a brace o' weeks.'

'Te-he,' answered Billy amicably. 'I'm just telling ye what I think myself—what I smell i' my nostrils, like—but I was never one to guess what my betters were thinking. Now, masters, I've been wondering.'

'Tell us, then,' said Hirst.

It was odd that he and David—the two most good-humoured men in Garth—had lost their tempers utterly to-night, and that it needed Billy's advent to show them the droll side of life again.

'I'm wondering if there was a fill o' baccy among the four o' ye—and may be a match to kindle a light with. Have been in terrible lonesome parts all day, and nigh forgotten what a pipeful tastes like.'

Billy, with folk he liked, was like a west wind following, moist and warm, upon dry, keen winds from out the east. Because his purpose and his creed in life, if he could own to such respectability, were hidden out of sight, he made his neighbours forget the importance even of a turkey-run. John Hirst—unhappy always when his temper got the better of him—bellowed joyously like his own three-year-old bull, glad to be rid that way of his ill-humour. David the Smith ceased looking at the wire-netting as if it were a mortal foe, and got out his tobacco-tin, and put it into Billy's hands, while one of the two farm-men handed him a match.

The sun was getting down toward Sharprise Hill now, and the smoke of Billy the Fool rose so that the slanting sunbeams caught it tranquilly, and the gnats, playing in this warmth of spring new-found after the long winter, drifted away in cloudy streams from a scent which they abhorred.

'Ye look terrible low in spirits, all of ye,' said Billy, after he was sure that his pipe was drawing well. 'I fancied, when I came by just now, I'd never seen four men sitting on a fence and looking so empty, like, of what they lacked.'

He had not seemed to look at them until he neared the fence; yet twenty yards away he had known what their mood was.

'Did ye ever handle wire-netting, Billy?' asked Hirst.

'Nay, not that I can call to mind.'

'Well, go up to yond turkey-pen, and see the way the netting runs into the hillock, choose what a body will with it; and, if ye can tell us wise folk how to set the durned thing straight, there's another fill o' baccy for ye, Billy, and a fill of ale, and another match to light your pipe with.'

Billy the Fool strolled up to the pen—the rents in his breeches showed the brown flesh through—and seemed not to look at it at all. Then he came back.

'Misters, might a Fool Billy say somewhat to wise folk?' he asked.

'Say on, Billy, lad! Say on.'

'Well, now, if Fool Billy were going to climb a hill, like, after what ye might call a stretch o' level walking, he'd sit him down first, would Billy, at th' hill-foot, and think a deal about it.'

'Ay, warrant he would!' chuckled David.

'Then he'd start fair again for yond uphill climb. Do the like wi' your netting, misters? Cut 'un off, says Billy, where he begins to go up hill—cut 'un off as clean as a whistle, and start him fair again.'

David's practical mind grasped at once that this was the right solution of the difficulty, and he laughed nearly as loud as Yeoman Hirst.

'Seems there's only one wise man in Garth! To think of us, farmer, fuming and fretting, and wasting our time; and Billy strolls up, and looks about him, and sets us straight in a minute. How d'ye do it, Billy, lad?'

'Nay, I do naught. I'd be feared to, David the Smith! A fearsome thing 'twould be if I'd to work like other-some of ye.'

Like a great general Billy stood by, and watched the progress of the work, when the four men set about their task again. His advice proved sound, and the netting began to climb the hill in an orderly, straight line.

As they worked—the sun lying now, a ball of softened fire, upon the edge of Sharprise Hill—the gate of the croft was opened again, impatiently this time, and Reuben Gaunt came through on horse-back. Billy had seen and heard him long before the others had; but he was the only one who did not turn his head about as Gaunt approached.

'Good-day, Mr. Hirst,' said Reuben, not pleased to find David the Smith and Fool Billy here, yet striving to cover up his uneasiness.

'Good-day, Mr. Gaunt,' answered Hirst, his face grown hard as a bit of limestone grit. 'I'll thank ye to close that gate behind ye.'

'Why? There are no beasts in the croft.'

'I'm not here to argufy. When you find a gate shut, shut it behind ye—that's what I was taught as a lad.'

It had been a day of insults for Gaunt, and he longed to snap some hasty answer out and ride away; but his errand robbed him of this slight consolation, and he made the best of an awkward matter.

'Billy, just run and shut that gate,' he said.

The natural turned at last, puffing gently at his pipe. 'Would oblige ye, I, but 'tis one o' my playtime-days, Mr. Reuben Gaunt. I'd have had dreams to-night if I did any work.'

One of Hirst's men ran to shut the gate, and Reuben looked the farmer in the eyes.

'I want a word with you.'

'Say it here, then, for I'm throng with work, and this job has to be finished off to-night.'

'It can't be said here. 'Tis a matter of private business, Mr. Hirst.'

'Well, I can spare ten minutes. David, see that these idle rogues get forrard wi' their work,' he added, nodding toward his farm-men as he moved off.

Gaunt dismounted and slipped the bridle through his arm, and the two were half across the croft before Billy the Fool found speech.

'Is yond turkey-cock o' yours abroad yet, farmer, as a body's body might say?' he called.

'Ay,' answered Hirst, without turning his head.

'Well, pen the devil up, says Fool Billy. Pen 'un up, farmer!'

When he had watched Hirst and Reuben Gaunt go slowly through the gate at the far end of the croft and up into the pastures, the natural relapsed into his former attitude. 'Get forrard, ye three wise folk!' he said, with inscrutable gravity of mien. 'We'll have th' old devil wired and boarded in, come to-morrow's morn.'

Gaunt found no easy task before him, now that he was alone with Hirst in the upper field. The yeoman, hearty and courteous to gentle and simple alike, could rarely bring himself to be civil toward Reuben. As he put it to himself, John Hirst had a 'feeling as if a rat was crawling over his chest when Gaunt of Marshlands was about.' The younger man's courage was chilled, moreover, by the open insult Hirst had given him in face of the farm-men.

'Well?' said the farmer, after a long silence.

Reuben Gaunt took the fence, as he had taken many another on hunting-days. 'Cilla has said she'll marry me, and I rode down to tell you.'

Hirst gasped, then rubbed his eyes, as if he woke from an evil dream and strove to shake it off.

'Say that again,' he muttered.

'Cilla has promised to marry me, and I'm going to be better than the Reuben Gaunt you've known.'

It was seldom that the yeoman could find a low voice or a harsh one ; but now he did, and his big, clean-cut face had in it the look of a man when he meets an enemy in righteous battle and lusts to kill him.

‘You’re a liar, Gaunt of Marshlands,’ he said quietly.

Gaunt flushed. ‘Will you come down to the house, then, and ask Cilla with me there, whether or no I’m a liar?’

‘Ay, by God I will! Seems you’re a fool, as well as a liar, or you’d never put it to the test. What, my Cilla mate wi’ the likes o’ ye? Ye’ve been drinking over-much at race-meetings, or somewhat of that sort, to fancy such outlandish nonsense.’

‘Come to the house with me, and ask Cilla,’ said the other, obstinately crushing down his spleen. ‘Is that fair, or isn’t it, Mr. Hirst?’

‘Fair? There’s naught fair when you come by with your slippery ways. But I’ll take ye into my house, all the same—for the last time—and I’ll set ye face to face with my lass, and we’ll shame ye out of Garth, she and me between us.’

The wind, that had been quietly veering all day to north of west, blew shrewdly as they went across the croft, at the far end of which Billy the Fool was overlooking the work of his three comrades. Hirst did not heed the change of wind; he was warm with faith of his little lass, and hot with anger against Gaunt. Above them three starlings were sporting in mid-air—the hen-bird flying swiftly, and the cock-birds fighting viciously even as they followed her.

‘Come ye in,’ said Hirst, leading Reuben round to the front door, whereas he would have ushered David in with little ceremony through the outer kitchen. ‘Come ye in, Mr. Gaunt, and I shall offer ye neither bite nor sup, though that would seem a shameful thing for Good Intent.’

‘Am needing none,’ said Reuben. ‘Seems a queer thing, all the same, that when I come to you with a straight tale——’

‘A straight tale?’ snapped Hirst. ‘What about my lass? Lad, ye’re crazy to think I don’t know your doings five years agone all up and down the countryside. Step in, however, and we’ll thrash this business out for good and all.’

(To be continued.)

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